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REMARKS
ON THE
CHARACTER AND WRITINGS
OF
JOHN MILTON,^{Napoleon,}
Milton &c.
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JOHN MILTON.

A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone.

By JOHN MILTON. Translated from the Original by CHARLES R. SUMNER, M. A. Librarian and Historiographer to His Majesty, and Prebendary of Canterbury. From the London Edition. Boston. 1825. 2 vols. 8vo.

THE discovery of a work of Milton, unknown to his own times, is an important event in literary history. The consideration, that we of this age are the first readers of this Treatise, naturally heightens our interest in it; for we seem in this way to be brought nearer to the author, and to sustain the same relation which his contemporaries bore to his writings. The work opens with a salutation, which, from any other man, might be chargeable with inflation; but which we feel to be the natural and appropriate expression of the spirit of Milton. Endowed with gifts of the soul, which have been imparted to few of our race, and conscious of having consecrated them through life to God and mankind, he rose without effort of affectation to the style of an Apostle.—**JOHN MILTON, TO ALL THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST, AND TO ALL WHO PROFESS THE CHRISTIAN FAITH THROUGHUOUT THE WORLD, PEACE, AND THE RE-**

COGNITION OF THE TRUTH, AND ETERNAL SALVATION IN
GOD THE FATHER, AND IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.'
Our ears are the first to hear this benediction, and
it seems not so much to be borne to us from a dis-
tant age, as to come immediately from the sainted
spirit, by which it was indited.

Without meaning to disparage the 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine,' we may say that it owes very much of the attention, which it has excited, to the fame of its author. We value it chiefly as showing us the mind of Milton on that subject, which, above all others, presses upon men of thought and sensibility. We want to know in what conclusions such a man rested after a life of extensive and profound research, of magnanimous efforts for freedom and his country, and of communion with the most gifted minds of his own and former times. The book derives its chief interest from its author, and accordingly there seems to be a propriety in introducing our remarks upon it with some notice of the character of Milton. We are not sure that we could have abstained from this subject, even if we had not been able to offer so good an apology for attempting it. The intellectual and moral qualities of a great man are attractions not easily withheld, and we can hardly serve others or ourselves more, than by recalling to him, the attention which is scattered among inferior topics.

In speaking of the *intellectual* qualities of Milton, we may begin with observing, that the very splendor of his poetic fame has tended to obscure or conceal the extent of his mind, and the variety of its energies and attainments. To many he seems only a poet, when in truth he was a profound scholar, a man of vast compass of thought; imbued thoroughly with all ancient and mod-

learning, and able to bluster, to mould, to impregnate with his own intellectual power, his great and various acquisitions. He had not learned the superficial doctrine of a later day, that poetry flourishes most in an uncultivated soil, and that imagination shapes its brightest visions from the mists of a superstitious age; and he had no dread of accumulating knowledge, lest it should oppress and smother his genius. He was conscious of that within him, which could quicken all knowledge, and wield it with ease and might; which could give freshness to old truths and harmony to discordant thoughts; which could bind together, by living ties and mysterious affinities, the most remote discoveries, and rear fabrics of glory and beauty from the rude materials, which other minds had collected. Milton had that universality which marks the highest order of intellect. Though accustomed almost from infancy to drink at the fountains of classical literature, he had nothing of the pedantry and fastidiousness, which disdain all other draughts. His healthy mind delighted in genius, on whatever soil, or in whatever age, it burst forth and poured out its fulness. He understood too well the rights, and dignity, and pride of creative imagination, to lay on it the laws of the Greek or Roman school. Parnassus was not to him the only holy ground of genius. He felt that poetry was as a universal presence. Great minds were everywhere his kindred. He felt the enchantment of Oriental fiction, surrendered himself to the strange creations of 'Araby the Blest,' and delighted still more in the romantic spirit of chivalry, and in the tales of wonder in which it was embodied. Accordingly his poetry reminds us of the ocean, which adds to its own boundlessness contributions from all regions under heaven. Nor was it only in the depart-

ment of imagination, that his acquisitions were vast. He travelled over the whole field of knowledge, as far as it had then been explored. His various philological attainments were used to put him in possession of the wisdom stored in all countries, where the intellect had been cultivated. The natural philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, history, theology, and political science of his own and former times, were familiar to him. Never was there a more unconfined mind, and we would cite Milton as a practical example of the benefits of that universal culture of intellect, which forms one distinction of our times, but which some dread as unfriendly to original thought. 'Let such remember, that mind is in its own nature diffusive. Its object is the universe, which is strictly one, or bound together by infinite connexions and correspondences ; and accordingly its natural progress is from one to another field of thought ; and wherever ~~original power~~, creative genius exists, the mind, far from being distracted or oppressed by the variety of its acquisitions, will see more and more common bearings and hidden and beautiful analogies in all the objects of knowledge, will see mutual light shed from truth to truth, and will compel, as with a kingly power, whatever it understands, to yield some tribute of proof, or illustration, or splendor, to whatever topic it would unfold.

Milton's fame rests chiefly on his poetry, and to this we naturally give our first attention. By those who are accustomed to speak of poetry as light reading, Milton's eminence in this sphere may be considered only as giving him a high rank among the contributors to public amusement. Not so thought Milton. Of all God's gifts of intellect, he esteemed poetical genius the most transcendent. He esteemed it in himself as a kind of

inspiration, and wrote his great works with something of the conscious dignity of a prophet. We agree with Milton in his estimate of poetry. It seems to us the divinest of all arts; for it is the breathing or expression of that principle or sentiment, which is deepest and sublimest in human nature; we mean, of that thirst or aspiration, to which no mind is wholly a stranger, for something purer and lovelier, something more powerful, lofty, and thrilling than ordinary and mortal life affords. No doctrine is more common among Christians than that of man's immortality; but it is not so generally understood, that the germs or principles of his whole future being are now wrapped up in his soul, as the rudiments of the future plant in the seed. As a necessary result of this constitution, the soul, possessed and moved by these mighty though infant energies, is perpetually stretching beyond what is present and visible, struggling against the bounds of its earthly prison-house, and seeking relief and joy in imaginings of unseen and ideal being. This view of our nature, which has never been fully developed, and which goes farther towards explaining the contradictions of human life than all others, carries us to the very foundation and sources of poetry. He who cannot interpret by his own consciousness what we now have said, wants the true key to works of genius. He has not penetrated those sacred recesses of the soul, where poetry is born and nourished, and inhales immortal vigor, and wings herself for her heavenward flight. In an intellectual nature, framed for progress and for higher modes of being, there must be creative energies, powers of original and ever growing thought; and poetry is this form in which these energies are chiefly manifested. It is the glorious prerogative of this art, that it 'makes all things new' for the gratification

cation of a divine instinct. It indeed finds its elements in what it actually sees and experiences, in the worlds of matter and mind; but it combines and blends these into new forms and according to new affinities; breaks down, if we may so say, the distinctions and bounds of nature; imparts to material objects life, and sentiment, and emotion, and invests the mind with the powers and splendors of the outward creation; describes the surrounding universe in the colors which the passions throw over it, and depicts the soul in those modes of repose or agitation, of tenderness or sublime emotion, which manifest its thirst for a more powerful and joyful existence. To a man of a literal and prosaic character, the mind may seem lawless in these workings; but it observes higher laws than it transgresses, the laws of the immortal intellect; it is trying and developing its best faculties; and in the objects which it describes, or in the emotions which it awakens, anticipates those states of progressive power, splendor, beauty, and happiness, for which it was created.

We accordingly believe that poetry, far from injuring society, is one of the great instruments of its refinement and exaltation. It lifts the mind above ordinary life, gives it a respite from depressing cares, and awakens the consciousness of its affinity with what is pure and noble. In its legitimate and highest efforts, it has the same tendency and aim with Christianity; that is, to spiritualize our nature. True, poetry has been made the instrument of vice, the pander of bad passions; but when genius thus stoops, it dims its fires, and parts with much of its power; and even when poetry is enslaved to licentiousness or misanthropy, she cannot wholly forget her true vocation. Strains of pure feeling, touches of tenderness, images of innocent hap-

ness, sympathies with suffering virtue, bursts of scorn or indignation at the hollowness of the world, passages true to our moral nature, often escape in an immoral work, and show us how hard it is for a gifted spirit to divorce itself wholly from what is good. Poetry has a natural alliance with our best affections. It delights in the beauty and sublimity of the outward creation and of the soul. It indeed portrays, with terrible energy, the excesses of the passions; but they are passions which show a mighty nature, which are full of power, which command awe, and excite a deep though shuddering sympathy. Its great tendency and purpose is, to carry the mind beyond and above the beaten, dusty, weary walks of ordinary life; to lift it into a purer element; and to breathe into it more profound and generous emotion. It reveals to us the loveliness of nature, brings back the freshness of early feeling, revives the relish of simple pleasures, keeps unquenched the enthusiasm which warmed the spring-time of our being, refines youthful love, strengthens our interest in human nature by vivid delineations of its tenderest and loftiest feelings, spreads our sympathies over all classes of society, knits us by new ties with universal being, and through the brightness of its prophetic visions, helps faith to lay hold on the future life.

We are aware, that it is objected to poetry, that it gives wrong views and excites false expectations of life, peoples the mind with shadows and illusions, and builds up imagination on the ruins of wisdom. That there is a wisdom, against which poetry wars, the wisdom of the senses, which makes physical comfort and gratification the supreme good, and wealth the chief interest of life, we do not deny; nor do we deem it the least service which poetry renders to mankind, that it reveals

them from the thraldom of this earthborn prudence. But, passing over this topic, we would observe, that the complaint against poetry as abounding in illusion and deception, is in the main groundless. In many poems there is more of truth than in many histories and philosophic theories. The fictions of genius are often the vehicles of the sublimest verities, and its flashes often open new regions of thought, and throw new light on the mysteries of our being. In poetry, when the letter is falsehood, the spirit is often profoundest wisdom. And if truth thus dwells in the boldest fictions of the poet, much more may it be expected in his delineations of life; for the present life, which is the first stage of the immortal mind, abounds in the materials of poetry, and it is the high office of the bard to detect this divine element among the grosser labors and pleasures of our earthly being. The present life is not wholly prosaic, precise, tame, and finite. To the gifted eye, it abounds in the poetic. The affections which spread beyond ourselves and stretch far into futurity; the workings of mighty passions, which seem to arm the soul with an almost superhuman energy; the innocent and irrepressible joy of infancy; the bloom, and buoyancy, and dazzling hopes of youth; the throbings of the heart, when it first wakes to love, and dreams of a happiness too vast for earth; woman, with her beauty, and grace, and gentleness, and fulness of feeling, and depth of affection, and blushes of purity, and the tones and looks which only a mother's heart can inspire;—these are all poetical. It is not true that the poet paints a life which does not exist. He only extracts and concentrates, as it were, life's ethereal essence, arrests and condenses its volatile fragrance, brings together its scattered beauties, and prolongs its more refined but evanescent joys.

And in this he does well; for it is good to feel that life is not wholly usurped by cares for subsistence, and physical gratifications, but admits, in measures which may be indefinitely enlarged, sentiments and delights worthy of a higher being. This power of poetry to refine our views of life and happiness, is more and more needed as society advances. It is needed to withstand the encroachments of heartless and artificial manners, which make civilisation so tame and uninteresting. It is needed to counteract the tendency of physical science, which being now sought, not, as formerly, for intellectual gratification, but for multiplying bodily comforts, requires a new developement of imagination, taste, and poetry, to preserve men from sinking into an earthly, material, Epicurean life.—Our remarks in vindication of poetry have extended beyond our original design. They have had a higher aim than to assert the dignity of Milton as a poet, and that is, to endear and recommend this divine art to all who reverence and would cultivate and refine their nature.

In delineating Milton's character as a *poet*, we are saved the necessity of looking far for its distinguishing attributes. His name is almost identified with sublimity. He is in truth the sublimest of men. He rises, not by effort or discipline, but by a native tendency and a godlike instinct, to the contemplation of objects of grandeur and awfulness. He always moves with a conscious energy. There is no subject so vast or terrific, as to repel or intimidate him. The overpowering grandeur of a theme kindles and attracts him. He enters on the description of the infernal regions with a fearless tread, as if he felt within himself a power to erect the prison-house of fallen spirits, to encircle them

with flames and horrors worthy of their crimes, to call forth from them shouts which should ‘tear hell’s concave,’ and to embody in their Chief an Archangel’s energies, and a Demon’s pride and hate. Even the stupendous conception of Satan seems never to oppress his faculties. This character of power runs through all Milton’s works. His descriptions of nature show a free and bold hand. He has no need of the minute, graphic skill, which we prize in Cowper or Crabbe. With a few strong or delicate touches, he impresses, as it were, his own mind on the scenes which he would describe, and kindles the imagination of the gifted reader to clothe them with the same radiant hues under which they appeared to his own.

This attribute of power is universally felt to characterize Milton. His sublimity is in every man’s mouth. Is it felt that his poetry breathes a sensibility and tenderness hardly surpassed by its sublimity? We apprehend that the grandeur of Milton’s mind has thrown some shade over his milder beauties; and this it has done, not only by being more striking and imposing, but by the tendency of vast mental energy to give a certain calmness to the expression of tenderness and deep feeling. A great mind is the master of its own enthusiasm, and does not often break out into those tumults, which pass with many for the signs of profound emotion. Its sensibility, though more intense and enduring, is more self-possessed, and less perturbed than that of other men, and is therefore less observed and felt, except by those who understand, through their own consciousness, the workings and utterance of genuine feeling. We might quote pages in illustration of the qualities here ascribed to Milton. Turn to Comus, one of ~~his~~ earliest productions. What sensibility breathes

in the descriptions of the benighted Lady's singing, by Comus and the Spirit !

*'Comus.—Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment ?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence:
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled ! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul
And lap it in Elysium ; Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause :
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself ;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now.'*

Lines 244—264.

*'Spirit.—At last a soft and solemn breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death.'*

Lines 555—563.

In illustration of Milton's tenderness, we will open almost at a venture.

*'Now Morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so customed, for his sleep
Was aery-light, from pure digestion bred,*

And temperate vapors bland, which th' only sound
 Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
 Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
 Of birds on every bough ; so much the more
 His wonder was to find unwakened Eve
 With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,
 As through unquiet rest : He on his side
 Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love
 Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
 Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
 Shot forth peculiar graces ; then with voice
 Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
 Her hand soft touching, whispered thus. Awake,
 My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
 Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight,
 Awake ! the morning shines, and the fresh field
 Calls us ; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
 Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove,
 What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
 How nature paints her colors, how the bee
 Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.'

Par. Lost, B. V. lines 1—25.

' So cheered he his fair spouse, and she was cheered,
 But silently a gentle tear let fall
 From either eye, and wiped them with her hair ;
 Two other precious drops that ready stood,
 Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell
 Kissed, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
 And pious awe, that feared to have offended.'

Par. Lost, B. V. lines 129—135.

From this very imperfect view of the qualities of Milton's poetry, we hasten to his great work, ' Paradise Lost,' perhaps the noblest monument of human genius. The two first books, by universal consent, stand pre-eminent in sublimity. Hell and hell's king have a terrible harmony, and dilate into new grandeur and awfulness, the longer we contemplate them. From one element, ~~solid~~ and liquid fire,' the poet has framed a

world of horror and suffering, such as imagination had never traversed. But fiercer flames than those which encompass Satan, burn in his own soul. Revenge, exasperated pride, consuming wrath, ambition, though fallen, yet unconquered by the thunders of the Omnipotent, and grasping still at the empire of the universe,—these form a picture more sublime and terrible than hell. Hell yields to the spirit which it imprisons. The intensity of its fires reveals the intenser passions and more vehement will of Satan; and the ruined archangel gathers into himself the sublimity of the scene which surrounds him. This forms the tremendous interest of these wonderful books. We see mind triumphant over the most terrible powers of nature. We see unutterable agony subdued by energy of soul. We have not indeed in Satan those bursts of passion, which rive the soul, as well as shatter the outward frame of Lear. But we have a depth of passion which only an archangel could manifest. The all-enduring, all-defying pride of Satan, assuming so majestically hell's burning throne, and coveting the diadem which scorches his thunder-blasted brow, is a creation requiring in its author almost the spiritual energy with which he invests the fallen seraph. Some have doubted whether the moral effect of such delineations of the storms and terrible workings of the soul is good; whether the interest felt in a spirit so transcendently evil as Satan, favors our sympathies with virtue. But our interest fastens, in this and like cases, on what is not evil. We gaze on Satan with an awe not unmixed with mysterious pleasure, as on a miraculous manifestation of the *power of mind*. What chains us, as with a resistless spell, in such a character, is spiritual might made visible by the racking pains which it overpowers. There ~~is some-~~

thing kindling and ennobling in the consciousness, however awakened, of the energy which resides in mind ; and many a virtuous man has borrowed new strength from the force, constancy, and dauntless courage of evil agents.

Milton's description of Satan attests in various ways the power of his genius. Critics have often observed, that the great difficulty of his work was to reconcile the spiritual properties of his supernatural beings with the human modes of existence which he is obliged to ascribe to them. The difficulty is too great for any genius wholly to overcome, and we must acknowledge that our enthusiasm is in some parts of the poem checked by a feeling of incongruity between the spiritual agent, and his sphere and mode of agency. But we are visited with no such chilling doubts and misgivings in the description of Satan in hell. Imagination has here achieved its highest triumph, in imparting a character of reality and truth to its most daring creations. That world of horrors, though material, is yet so remote from our ordinary nature, that a spiritual being, exiled from heaven, finds there an appropriate home. There is, too, an indefiniteness in the description of Satan's person, which excites without shocking the imagination, and aids us to reconcile in our conception of him, a human form with his superhuman attributes. To the production of this effect, much depends on the first impression given by the poet ; for this is apt to follow us through the whole work ; and here we think Milton eminently successful. The first glimpse of Satan is given us in the following lines, which, whilst too indefinite to provoke, and too sublime to allow, the scrutiny of the reason, fill the imagination of the reader with a form which can hardly be effaced.

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate
 With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
 That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
 Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
 Lay floating many a rood.'

Par. Lost, B. I. lines 192—196.

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
 His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
 Driven backward, slope their pointing spires, and rolled
 In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.'

Lines 221—224.

We have more which we would gladly say of the delineation of Satan; especially of the glimpses which are now and then given of his deep anguish and despair, and of the touches of better feelings which are skilfully thrown into the dark picture, both suited and designed to blend with our admiration, dread, and abhorrence, a measure of that sympathy and interest, with which every living, thinking being ought to be regarded, and without which all other feelings tend to sin and pain. But there is another topic which we cannot leave untouched. From hell we flee to Paradise, a region as lovely as hell is terrible, and which to those who do not know the universality of true genius, will appear doubly wonderful, when considered as the creation of the same mind, which had painted the infernal world.

Paradise and its inhabitants are in sweet accordance, and together form a scene of tranquil bliss, which calms and soothes, whilst it delights the imagination. Adam and Eve, just moulded by the hand, and quickened by the breath of God, reflect in their countenances and forms, as well as minds, the intelligence, benignity, and happiness of their Author. Their new existence has the freshness and peacefulness of the dewy morn-

ing. Their souls, unsated and untainted, find an innocent joy in the youthful creation, which spreads and smiles around them. Their mutual love is deep, for it is the love of young, unworn, unexhausted hearts, which meet in each other the only human objects on whom to pour forth their fulness of affection ; and still it is serene, for it is the love of happy beings, who know not suffering even by name, whose innocence excludes not only the tumults but the thought of jealousy and shame, who, ‘imparadised in one another’s arms,’ scarce dream of futurity, so blessed is their present being. We will not say that we envy our first parents ; for we feel that there may be higher happiness than theirs, a happiness won through struggle with inward and outward foes, the happiness of power and moral victory, the happiness of disinterested sacrifices and wide-spread love, the happiness of boundless hope, and of ‘thoughts which wander through eternity.’ Still there are times, when the spirit, oppressed with pain, worn with toil, tired of tumult, sick at the sight of guilt, wounded in its love, baffled in its hope, and trembling in its faith, almost longs for the ‘wings of a dove, that it might fly away’ and take refuge amidst the ‘shady bowers,’ the ‘vernal airs,’ the ‘roses without thorns,’ the quiet, the beauty, the loveliness of Eden. It is the contrast of this deep peace of Paradise with the storms of life, which gives to the fourth and fifth books of this poem a charm so irresistible, that not a few would sooner relinquish the two first books, with all their sublimity, than part with these. It has sometimes been said, that the English language has no good pastoral poetry. We would ask, in what age or country has the pastoral reed breathed such sweet strains as are borne to us on ‘the odoriferous wings of gentle gales’ from Milton’s Paradise ?

We should not fulfil our duty, were we not to say one word on what has been justly celebrated, the harmony of Milton's versification. His numbers have the prime charm of expressiveness. They vary with, and answer to the depth, or tenderness, or sublimity of his conceptions, and hold intimate alliance with the soul. Like Michael Angelo, in whose hands the marble was said to be flexible, he bends our language, which foreigners reproach with hardness, into whatever forms the subject demands. All the treasures of sweet and solemn sound are at his command. Words, harsh and discordant in the writings of less gifted men, flow through his poetry in a full stream of harmony. This power over language is not to be ascribed to Milton's musical ear. It belongs to the soul. It is a gift or exercise of genius, which has power to impress itself on whatever it touches, and finds or frames in sounds, motions, and material forms, correspondences and harmonies with its own fervid thoughts and feelings.

We close our remarks on Milton's poetry with observing, that it is characterized by seriousness. Great and various as are its merits, it does not discover all the variety of genius, which we find in Shakspeare, whose imagination revelled equally in regions of mirth, beauty, and terror, now evoking spectres, now sporting with fairies, and now 'ascending the highest heaven of invention.' Milton was cast on times too solemn and eventful, was called to take part in transactions too perilous, and had too perpetual need of the presence of high thoughts and motives, to indulge himself in light and gay creations, even had his genius been more flexible and sportive. But Milton's poetry, though habitually serious, is always healthful, and bright, and vigorous. It has no gloom. He took no pleasure in draw-

ing dark pictures of life ; for he knew by experience, that there is a power in the soul to transmute calamity into an occasion and nutriment of moral power and triumphant virtue. We find nowhere in his writings that whining sensibility and exaggeration of morbid feeling, which makes so much of modern poetry effeminating. If he is not gay, he is not spirit-broken. His *L'Allegro* proves, that he understood thoroughly the bright and joyous aspects of nature ; and in his *Penseroso*, where he was tempted to accumulate images of gloom, we learn that the saddest views which he took of creation, are such as inspire only pensive musing or lofty contemplation.

From Milton's poetry, we turn to his *prose*. We rejoice that the dust is beginning to be wiped from his prose writings, and that the public are now learning, what the initiated have long known, that these contain passages hardly inferior to his best poetry, and that they are throughout marked with the same vigorous mind which gave us *Paradise Lost*. The attention to these works has been discouraged by some objections, on which we shall bestow a few remarks.

At first, it is objected to his *prose* writings, that the style is difficult and obscure, abounding in involutions, transpositions, and Latinisms ; that his protracted sentences exhaust and weary the mind, and too often yield it no better recompence than confused and indistinct perceptions. We mean not to deny that these charges have some grounds ; but they seem to us much exaggerated ; and when we consider that the difficulties of Milton's style have almost sealed up his *prose* writings, we cannot but lament the fastidiousness and effeminity of modern readers. We know that simpli-

city and perspicuity are important qualities of style ; but there are vastly nobler and more important ones ; such as energy and richness, and in these Milton is not surpassed. The best style is not that which puts the reader most easily and in the shortest time in possession of a writer's naked thoughts ; but that which is the truest image of a great intellect, which conveys fully and carries farthest into other souls the conceptions and feelings of a profound and lofty spirit. To be universally intelligible is not the highest merit. A great mind cannot, without injurious constraint, shrink itself to the grasp of common passive readers. Its natural movement is free, bold, and majestic, and it ought not to be required to part with these attributes, that the multitude may keep pace with it. A full mind will naturally overflow in long sentences, and in the moment of inspiration, when thick-coming thoughts and images crowd upon it, will often pour them forth in a splendid confusion, dazzling to common readers, but kindling to congenial spirits. There are writings which are clear through their shallowness. We must not expect in the ocean the transparency of the calm inland stream. For ourselves, we love what is called easy reading perhaps too well, especially in our hours of relaxation ; but we love too to have our faculties tasked by master spirits. We delight in long sentences, in which a great truth, instead of being broken up into numerous periods, is spread out in its full proportions, is irradiated with variety of illustration and imagery, is set forth in a splendid affluence of language, and flows, like a full stream, with a majestic harmony which fills at once the ear and the soul. Such sentences are worthy and noble manifestations of a great and far looking mind, which grasps at once vast fields of thought, just as the natural eye

takes in at a moment wide prospects of grandeur and beauty. We would not indeed have all compositions of this character. Let abundant provision be made for the common intellect. Let such writers as Addison, an honored name, ‘bring down philosophy from heaven to earth.’ But let inspired genius fulfil its higher function of lifting the prepared mind from earth to heaven. Impose upon it no strict laws, for it is its own best law. Let it speak in its own language, in tones which suit its own ear. Let it not lay aside its natural port, or dwarf itself that it may be comprehended by the surrounding multitude. If not understood and relished now, let it place a generous confidence in other ages, and utter oracles which futurity will expound. We are led to these remarks, not merely for Milton’s justification, but because our times seem to demand them. Literature, we fear, is becoming too popular. The whole community is now turned into readers, and in this we heartily rejoice; and we rejoice too that so much talent is employed in making knowledge accessible to all. We hail the general diffusion of intelligence as the brightest feature of the present age. But good and evil are never disjoined; and one bad consequence of the multitude of readers, is, that men of genius are too anxious to please the multitude, and prefer a present shout of popularity to that less tumultuous, but deeper, more thrilling note of the trump of Fame, which resounds and grows clearer and louder through all future ages.

We now come to a much more serious objection to Milton’s prose writings, and that is, that they are disfigured by party spirit, coarse invective, and controversial asperity; and here we are prepared to say, that there are passages in these works which every admirer of his

character must earnestly desire to expunge. Milton's alleged virulence was manifested towards private and public foes. The first, such as Salmasius and Morus, deserved no mercy. They poured out on his spotless character torrents of calumny, charging him with the blackest vices of the heart and the foulest enormities of the life. It ought to be added, that the manners and spirit of Milton's age justified a retaliation on such offenders, which the more courteous, and, we will hope, more christian spirit of the present times will not tolerate. Still we mean not to be his apologists. Milton, raised as he was above his age, and fortified with the consciousness of high virtue, ought to have been, both to his own and future times, an example of christian equanimity: In regard to the public enemies whom he assailed, we mean the despots in church and state, and the corrupt institutions which had stirred up a civil war, the general strain of his writings, though strong and stern, must exalt him, notwithstanding his occasional violence, among the friends of civil and religious liberty. That liberty was in peril. Great evils were struggling for perpetuity, and could only be broken down by great power. Milton felt that interests of infinite moment were at stake; and who will blame him for binding himself to them with the whole energy of his great mind, and for defending them with fervor and vehemence? We must not mistake christian benevolence, as if it had but one voice, that of soft entreaty. It can speak in piercing and awful tones. There is constantly going on in our world a conflict between good and evil. The cause of human nature has always to wrestle with foes. All improvement is a victory won by struggles. It is especially true of those great periods which have been distinguished by revolutions in government and religion,

and from which we date the most rapid movements of the human mind, that they have been signalized by conflict. Thus Christianity convulsed the world and grew up amidst storms ; and the Reformation of Luther was a signal to universal war ; and Liberty in both worlds has encountered opposition, over which she has triumphed only through her own immortal energies. At such periods, men, gifted with great power of thought and loftiness of sentiment, are especially summoned to the conflict with evil. They hear, as it were, in their own magnanimity and generous aspirations, the voice of a divinity ; and thus commissioned, and burning with a passionate devotion to truth and freedom, they must and will speak with an indignant energy, and they ought not to be measured by the standard of ordinary minds in ordinary times. Men of natural softness and timidity, of a sincere, but effeminate virtue, will be apt to look on these bolder, harder spirits, as violent, perturbed, and uncharitable ; and the charge will not be wholly groundless. But that deep feeling of evils, which is necessary to effectual conflict with them, and which marks God's most powerful messengers to mankind, cannot breathe itself in soft and tender accents. The deeply moved soul will speak strongly, and ought to speak so as to move and shake nations.

We have offered these remarks as strongly applicable to Milton. He reverenced and loved human nature, and attached himself to its great interests with a fervor of which only such a mind was capable. He lived in one of those solemn periods which determine the character of ages to come. His spirit was stirred to its very centre by the presence of danger. He lived in the midst of the battle. That the ardor of his spirit sometimes passed the bounds of wisdom and charity, and

poured forth unwarrantable invective, we see and lament. But the purity and loftiness of his mind break forth amidst his bitterest invectives. We see a noble nature still. We see that no feigned love of truth and freedom was a covering for selfishness and malignity. He did indeed love and adore uncorrupted religion, and intellectual liberty, and let his name be enrolled among their truest champions. Milton has told us, in his own noble style, that he entered on his principal controversy with episcopacy, reluctantly and only through a deep conviction of duty. The introduction to the second book of his ‘Reason of Church Government,’ shows us the workings of his mind on this subject, and is his best vindication from the charge we are now repelling. He says—

‘ Surely to every good and peaceable man, it must in nature needs be a hateful thing, to be the displeaser and molester of thousands; much better would it like him, doubtless, to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own true happiness. But when God commands to take the trumpet, and blow a dolorous or a jarring blast, it lies not in man’s will what he shall say, or what he shall conceal. *** This I foresee, that should the church be brought under heavy oppression, and God have given me ability the while to reason against that man that should be the author of so foul a deed, or should she, by blessing from above, on the industry and courage of faithful men, change this her distracted estate into better days, without the least furtherance or contribution of those few talents which God at that present had lent me; I foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of discourage and reproach. “Timorous and ungrateful, the church of God is now again at the foot of her insulting enemies, and thou bewailest; what matters it for thee or thy bewailing? When time was, thou couldst not find a syllable of all that thou hast read or studied, to utter in her behalf. Yet ease and leisure was given thee for thy retired thoughts, out of the sweat of other men. Thou hadst the diligence, the parts, the language of a man, if a vain subject were to be adorned or beautified; but when the

cause of God and his church was to be pleaded, for which purpose that tongue was given thee which thou hast, God listened if he could hear thy voice among his zealous servants, but thou wert dumb as a beast ; from henceforward be that which thine own brutish silence hath made thee." *** But now by this little diligence, mark what a privilege I have gained with good men and saints, to claim my right of lamenting the tribulations of the church, if she should suffer, when others that have ventured nothing for her sake, have not the honor to be admitted mourners. But, if she lift up her drooping head and prosper, among those that have something more than wished her welfare, I have my charter and freehold of rejoicing to me and my heirs.

' Concerning therefore this wayward subject against prelacy, the touching whereof is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men, as by what hath been said I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only, and a preventive fear lest the omitting of this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the good provision of peaceful hours.'

Vol. I. pp. 139—41.*

He then goes on to speak of his consciousness of possessing great poetical powers, which he was most anxious to cultivate. Of these he speaks thus magnificently

' These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God rarely bestowed, but yet to some, though most abuse, in every nation ; and are of power,—to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue, and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune ; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almighty, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church ; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and

* From the introduction to the second book of 'The Reason of Church Government, &c.' Vol. I. p. 187, &c. of 'A Selection from the English Prose Works of John Milton,' Boston, 1826, to which all our references are made.

God's true worship ; lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within ; all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe.'

Vol. I. pp. 145, 6.

He then gives intimations of his having proposed to himself a great poetical work, 'a work,' he says—

' Not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapors of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.'

Vol. I. p. 148.

He then closes with a passage showing from what principles he forsook these delightful studies for controversy.

' I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies. *** But were it the meanest underservice, if God by his secretary conscience enjoin it, it were sad for me if I should draw back ; for me especially, now when all men offer their aid to help, ease, and lighten the difficult labors of the church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions, till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either strait perjure, or split his faith, I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing.'

Vol. I. p. 149.

These passages, replete with Milton's genius and greatness of soul, show us the influences and motives under which his prose works were written, and help us to interpret passages, which, if taken separately, might justify us in ascribing to him a character of excessive indignation and scorn.

Milton's most celebrated prose work is his 'Areopagita, or a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing,' a noble work indeed, a precious manual of freedom, an arsenal of immortal weapons for the defence of man's highest prerogative, intellectual liberty. His 'Reformation in England' and 'Reason of Church Government,' are the most important theological treatises published during his life. They were his earliest prose compositions, and thrown off with much haste, and on these accounts are more chargeable with defects of style than any other of his writings. But these, with all their defects, abound in strong and elevated thought, and in power and felicity of expression. Their great blemish is an inequality of style, often springing from the conflict and opposition of the impulses under which he wrote. It is not uncommon to find in the same sentence his affluent genius pouring forth magnificent images and expressions, and suddenly his deep scorn for his opponents, suggesting and throwing into the midst of this splendor; sarcasms and degrading comparisons altogether at variance with the general strain. From this cause, and from negligence, many powerful passages in his prose writings are marred by an incongruous mixture of unworthy allusions and phrases.—In the close of his first work, that on 'Reformation in England,' he breaks out into an invocation and prayer to the Supreme Being, from which we extract a passage containing a remarkable intimation of his having meditated some

great poetical enterprise from his earliest years, and giving full promise of that grandeur of thought and language, which characterizes ‘Paradise Lost.’ Having ‘lifted up his hands to that eternal and propitious Throne, where nothing is readier than grace and refuge to the distresses of mortal suppliants,’ and besought God to perfect the work of civil and religious deliverance begun in England, he proceeds thus;—

‘Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, *some one may perhaps be heard offering* at high strains in new and lofty measures, to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies, and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages, whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her old vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest and most christian people at that day, when Thou, the eternal and shortly expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of the world, and distributing national honors and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they undoubtfully, that by their labors, counsels and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal addition of principalities, legions, and thrones into their glorious titles, and, in supereminence of beatific vision, progressing the dateless and irrevoable circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss, in overmeasure for ever.’

Vol. I. pp. 69, 70.

We have not time to speak of Milton’s political treatises. We close our brief remarks on his prose writings, with recommending them to all who can enjoy great beauties in the neighbourhood of great faults, and who would learn the compass, energy, and richness of our language; and still more do we recommend them to those, who desire to nourish in their breasts magnanimity of sentiment and an unquenchable love of free-

dom. They bear the impress of that seal by which genius distinguishes its productions from works of learning and taste. The great and decisive test of genius, is, that it calls forth *power* in the souls of others. It not merely gives knowledge, but breathes energy. There are authors, and among these Milton holds the highest rank, in approaching whom we are conscious of an access of intellectual strength. A ‘virtue goes out’ from them. We discern more clearly, not merely because a new light is thrown over objects, but because our own vision is strengthened. Sometimes a single word, spoken by the voice of genius, goes far into the heart. A hint, a suggestion, an undefined delicacy of expression, teaches more than we gather from volumes of less gifted men. The works which we should chiefly study, are not those which contain the greatest fund of knowledge, but which raise us into sympathy with the intellectual energy of the author, and through which a great mind multiplies itself, as it were, in the reader. Milton’s prose works are imbued as really, if not as thoroughly, as his poetry, with this quickening power, and they will richly reward those who are receptive of this influence.

11975.

We now leave the writings of Milton to offer a few remarks on his *moral* qualities. His moral character was as strongly marked as his intellectual, and it may be expressed in one word, *magnanimity*. It was in harmony with his poetry. He had a passionate love of the higher, more commanding, and majestic virtues, and fed his youthful mind with meditations on the perfection of a human being. In a letter written to an Italian friend before his thirtieth year, and translated by Hayley, we have the vivid picture of his aspirations after virtue.

‘ As to other points, what God may have determined for me I know not ; but this I know, that if he eyer instilled an intense love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, he has instilled it into mine. Ceres in the fable pursued not her daughter with a greater keenness of inquiry, than I day and night the idea of perfection. Hence, wherever I find a man despising the false estimates of the vulgar, and daring to aspire in sentiment, language, and conduct, to what the highest wisdom, through every age, has taught us as most excellent, to him I unite myself by a sort of necessary attachment ; and if I am so influenced by nature or destiny, that by no exertion or labors of my own I may exalt myself to this summit of worth and honor, yet no powers of heaven or earth will hinder me from looking with reverence and affection upon those, who have thoroughly attained this glory, or appeared engaged in the successful pursuit of it.’

His *Comus* was written in his twenty-sixth year, and on reading this exquisite work our admiration is awakened, not so much by observing how the whole spirit of poetry had descended on him at that early age, as by witnessing how his whole youthful soul was penetrated, awed, and lifted up by the austere charms, ‘ the radiant light,’ the invincible power, the celestial peace of saintly virtue. He reverenced moral purity and elevation, not only for its own sake, but as the inspirer of intellect, and especially of the higher efforts of poetry. ‘ I was confirmed,’ he says in his usual noble style—

‘ I was confirmed in this opinion ; that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things ; not presuming to sing of high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.’

Vol. I. pp. 237, 8.

We learn from his works, that he used his multifarious reading to build up within himself this reverence for virtue. Ancient history, the sublime musings of

Plato, and the heroic self-abandonment of chivalry, joined their influences with prophets and apostles, in binding him ‘everlastingly in willing homage’ to the great, the honorable, and the lovely in character. A remarkable passage to this effect we quote from his account of his youth.

‘ I betook me among those lofty fables and romances, which recount in solemn cantos, the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom. There I read it in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood or of his life, if it so befell him, the honor and chastity of virgin or matron; from whence even then I learned what a noble virtue chastity sure must be, to the defence of which so many worthies by such a dear adventure of themselves, had sworn. *** So that even these, books which to many others have been the fuel of wantonness and loose living, I cannot think how, unless by divine indulgence, proved to me so many incitements, as you have heard, to the love and steadfast observation of virtue.’

Vol. I. pp. 238, 9.

All Milton’s habits were expressive of a refined and self-denying character. When charged by his unprincipled slanderers with licentious habits, he thus gives an account of his morning hours.

‘ Those morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping, or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring, in winter often ere the sound of any bell awake men to labor, or devotion; in summer as oft with the bird that first roues, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its full fraught; then with useful and generous labors preserving the body’s health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion, and our country’s liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations, rather than to see the ruin of our protestation, and the enforcement of a slavish life.’

Vol. I. p. 233.

We have enlarged on the strictness and loftiness of Milton's virtue, not only from our interest in the subject, but that we may put to shame and silence, those men who make genius an apology for vice, and take the sacred fire, kindled by God within them, to inflame men's passions, and to minister to a vile sensuality.

We see Milton's greatness of mind in his fervent and constant attachment to liberty. Freedom, in all its forms and branches, was dear to him, but especially freedom of thought and speech, of conscience and worship, freedom to seek, profess, and propagate truth. The liberty of ordinary politicians, which protects men's outward rights, and removes restraints from the pursuit of property and outward good, fell very short of that for which Milton lived, and was ready to die. The tyranny which he hated most, was that which broke the intellectual and moral power of the community. The worst feature of the institutions which he assailed, was, that they fettered the mind. He felt within himself that the human mind had a principle of perpetual growth, that it was essentially diffusive and made for progress, and he wished every chain broken, that it might run the race of truth and virtue with increasing ardor and success. This attachment to a spiritual and refined freedom, which never forsook him in the hottest controversies, contributed greatly to protect his genius, imagination, taste, and sensibility from the withering and polluting influences of public station, and of the rage of parties. It threw a hue of poetry over politics, and gave a sublime reference to his service of the commonwealth. The fact that Milton, in that stormy day, and amidst the trials of public office, kept his high faculties undraped, was a proof of no common greatness. Politics, however they make the intellect active, saga-

cious, and inventive, within a certain sphere, generally extinguish its thirst for universal truth, paralyse sentiment and imagination, corrupt the simplicity of the mind, destroy that confidence in human virtue, which lies at the foundation of philanthropy and generous sacrifices, and end in cold and prudent selfishness. Milton passed through a revolution, which, in its last stages and issue, was peculiarly fitted to damp enthusiasm, to scatter the visions of hope, and to infuse doubts of the reality of virtuous principle ; and yet the ardor, and moral feeling, and enthusiasm of his youth, came forth unhurt, and even exalted from the trial.

Before quitting the subject of Milton's devotion to liberty, it ought to be recorded, that he wrote his celebrated 'Defence of the People of England' after being distinctly forewarned by his physicians, that the effect of this exertion would be the utter loss of sight. His reference to this part of his history, in a short poetical effusion, is too characteristic to be withheld. It is inscribed to Cyriac Skinner, the friend to whom he appears to have confided his lately discovered 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine.'

'Cyriac, this three years day these eyes, though clear
 To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
 Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot,
 Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
 Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,
 Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
 Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
 Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
 Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
 The conscience, Friend, to have lost them overplied
 In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
 Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
 This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask,
 alent though blind, had I no better guide.'

We see Milton's magnanimity in the circumstances under which 'Paradise Lost' was written. It was not in prosperity, in honor, and amidst triumphs, but in disappointment, desertion, and in what the world calls disgrace, that he composed that work. The cause with which he had identified himself, had failed. His friends were scattered; liberty was trodden under foot; and her devoted champion was a by-word among the triumphant royalists. But it is the prerogative of true greatness to glorify itself in adversity, and to meditate and execute vast enterprises in defeat. Milton, fallen in outward condition, afflicted with blindness, disappointed in his best hopes, applied himself with characteristic energy to the sublimest achievement of intellect, solacing himself with great thoughts, with splendid creations, and with a prophetic confidence, that however neglected in his own age, he was framing in his works a bond of union and fellowship with the illustrious spirits of a brighter day. We delight to contemplate him in his retreat and last years. To the passing spectator, he seemed fallen and forsaken, and his blindness was reproached as a judgment from God. But though sightless, he lived in light. His inward eye ranged through universal nature, and his imagination shed on it brighter beams than the sun. Heaven, and hell, and paradise were open to him. He visited past ages, and gathered round him ancient sages and heroes, prophets and apostles, brave knights and gifted bards. As he looked forward, ages of liberty dawned and rose to his view, and he felt that he was about to bequeath to them an inheritance of genius, 'which would not fade away,' and was to live in the memory, reverence, and love, of remotest generations.

We have enlarged on Milton's character, not only from the pleasure of paying that sacred debt which the mind owes to him who has quickened and delighted it, but from an apprehension that Milton has not yet reaped his due harvest of esteem and veneration. The mists which the prejudices and bigotry of Johnson spread over his bright name, are not yet wholly scattered, though fast passing away. We wish not to disparage Johnson. We could find no pleasure in sacrificing one great man to the *manes* of another. But we owe it to Milton and to other illustrious names, to say, that Johnson has failed of the highest end of biography, which is to give immortality to virtue, and to call forth fervent admiration towards those who have shed splendor on past ages. We acquit Johnson, however, of intentional misrepresentation. He did not, and could not, appreciate Milton. We doubt whether two other minds, having so little in common as those of which we are now speaking, can be found in the higher walks of literature. Johnson was great in his own sphere, but that sphere was comparatively 'of the earth,' whilst Milton's was only inferior to that of angels. It was customary, in the day of Johnson's glory, to call him a giant, to class him with a mighty, but still an earth-born race. Milton we should rank among seraphs. Johnson's mind acted chiefly on man's actual condition, on the realities of life, on the springs of human action, on the passions which now agitate society, and he seems hardly to have dreamed of a higher state of the human mind than was then exhibited. Milton, on the other hand, burned with a deep, yet calm love of moral grandeur and celestial purity. He thought, not so much of what man is, as of what he might become. His own

mind was a revelation to him of a higher condition of humanity, and to promote this he thirsted and toiled for *freedom, as the element for the growth and improvement of his nature.*—In religion Johnson was gloomy and inclined to superstition, and on the subject of government leaned towards absolute power; and the idea of reforming either, never entered his mind but to disturb and provoke it. The church and the civil polity under which he lived, seemed to him perfect, unless he may have thought that the former would be improved by a larger infusion of Romish rites and doctrines, and the latter by an enlargement of the royal prerogative. Hence a tame acquiescence in the present forms of religion and government, marks his works. Hence we find so little in his writings which is electric and soul-kindling, and which gives the reader a consciousness of being made for a state of loftier thought and feeling than the present. Milton's whole soul, on the contrary, revolted against the maxims of legitimacy, hereditary faith, and servile reverence for established power. He could not brook the bondage to which men had bowed for ages. ‘Reformation’ was the first word of public warning which broke from his youthful lips, and the hope of it was the solace of his declining years. The difference between Milton and Johnson, may be traced, not only in these great features of mind, but in their whole characters. Milton was refined and spiritual in his habits, temperate almost to abstemiousness, and refreshed himself after intellectual effort by music. Johnson inclined to more sensual delights. Milton was exquisitely alive to the outward creation, to sounds, motions, and forms, to natural beauty and grandeur. Johnson, through defect of physical organization, if not through deeper deficiency, had little susceptibility of

these pure and delicate pleasures, and would not have exchanged the Strand for the vale of Tempe or the gardens of the Hesperides. How could Johnson be just to Milton ! The comparison which we have instituted, has compelled us to notice Johnson's defects. But we trust we are not blind to his merits. His stately march, his pomp and power of language, his strength of thought, his reverence for virtue and religion, his vigorous logic, his practical wisdom, his insight into the springs of human action, and the solemn pathos which occasionally pervades his descriptions of life, and his references to his own history, command our willing admiration. That he wanted enthusiasm and creative imagination and lofty sentiment, was not his fault. We do not blame him for not being Milton. We love intellectual power in all its forms, and delight in the variety of mind. We blame him only that his passions, prejudices, and bigotry engaged him in the unworthy task of obscuring the brighter glory of one of the most gifted and virtuous men. We would even treat what we deem the faults of Johnson with a tenderness approaching respect ; for they were results, to a degree which man cannot estimate, of a diseased, irritable, nervous, unhappy physical temperament, and belonged to the body more than to the mind. We only ask the friends of genius not to put their faith in Johnson's delineations of it. His biographical works are tinged with his notoriously strong prejudices, and of all his 'Lives,' we hold that of Milton to be the most apocryphal.

We here close our general remarks on Milton's intellectual and moral qualities. We venerate him as a man of genius, but still more as a man of magnanimity and christian virtue, who regarded genius and poetry

as sacred gifts, imparted to him, not to amuse men or to build up a reputation, but that he might quicken and call forth what was great and divine in his fellow creatures, and might secure the only true fame, the admiration of minds which his writings were to kindle and exalt.

We come now to the examination of the newly discovered ‘Treatise on Christian Doctrine.’ This work, we have said, owes its chief interest to the character of its author. From its very nature, it cannot engage and fix general attention. It consists very much of collections of texts of scripture, which, however exciting in their proper places, are read with little thought or emotion when taken from their ordinary connexion, and marshalled under systematic heads. Milton aims to give us the doctrines of revelation in its own words. We have them in a phraseology long familiar to us, and we are disappointed; for we expected to see them, not in the language of the bible, but as existing in the mind of Milton, modified by his peculiar intellect and sensibility, combined and embodied with his various knowledge, illustrated by the analogies, brightened by the new lights, and clothed with the associations, with which they were surrounded by this gifted man. We hoped to see these doctrines as they were viewed by Milton in his moments of solemn feeling and deep contemplation, when they pervaded and moved his whole soul. Still there are passages in which Milton’s mind is laid open to us. We refer to the parts of the work, where the peculiarity of his opinions obliges him to state his reasons for adopting them; and these we value highly for the vigor and independence of intellect with which they are impressed. The work is plain and unambitious in style. Its characteristics are a calm

earnestness, and that profound veneration for scripture, which certain denominations of Christians, who have little congeniality with Milton, seem to claim as a monopoly.

His introduction is worthy every man's attention, as a deliberate, mild assertion of the dearest right of human nature, that of free inquiry.

'If I communicate the result of my inquiries to the world at large ; if, as God is my witness, it be with a friendly and benignant feeling towards mankind, that I readily give as wide a circulation as possible to what I esteem my best and richest possession, I hope to meet with a candid reception from all parties, and that none at least will take unjust offence, even though many things should be brought to light, which will at once be seen to differ from certain received opinions. I earnestly beseech all lovers of truth, not to cry out that the church is thrown into confusion by that freedom of discussion and inquiry, which is granted to the schools, and ought certainly to be refused to no believer, since we are ordered *to prove all things*, and since the daily progress of the light of truth is productive; far less of disturbance to the church, than of illumination and edification.'

Vol. I. pp. 5—6.

'It has also been my object to make it appear from the opinions I shall be found to have advanced, whether new or old, of how much consequence to the christian religion is the liberty, not only of winnowing and sifting every doctrine, but also of thinking and even writing respecting it, according to our individual faith and persuasion; an inference which will be stronger in proportion to the weight and importance of those opinions, or rather in proportion to the authority of scripture, on the abundant testimony of which they rest. Without this liberty there is neither religion nor gospel—force alone prevails, by which it is disgraceful for the christian religion to be supported. Without this liberty we are still enslaved, not indeed, as formerly, under the divine law, but, what, is worst of all, under the law of man, or to speak more truly, under a barbarous tyranny.'

Vol. I. pp. 7—8.

On that great subject, the character of God, Milton has given nothing particularly worthy of notice, except that he is more disposed than Christians in general, to

conceive of the Supreme Being under the forms and affections of human nature.

'If God habitually assign to himself the members and form of man, why should we be afraid of attributing to him what he attributes to himself, so long as what is imperfection and weakness, when viewed in reference to ourselves, be considered as most complete and excellent whenever it is imputed to God?' Vol. I. p. 23.

Milton is not the first Christian, who has thought to render the Supreme Being more interesting by giving him human shape. We doubt the wisdom of this expedient. To spiritualize our conceptions of him, seems to us the true process for strengthening our intimacy with him; for in this way only can we think of him as immediately present to our minds. As far as we give him a material form, we must assign to him a place, and that place will almost necessarily be a distant one, and thus we shall remove him from the soul, which is his true temple. Besides, a definite form clashes with God's infinity, which is his supreme distinction and on no account to be obscured; for strange as it may seem to those who know not their own nature, this incomprehensible attribute is that which above all things constitutes the correspondence or adaptation, if we may so speak, of God to the human mind.

In treating of God's efficiency, Milton strenuously maintains human freedom, in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. He maintains that God's decrees do not encroach on moral liberty; for our free agency is the very object decreed and predestined by the Creator. He maintains that some of the passages of scripture which speak of election, are to be understood of an election to outward privileges, not to everlasting life; and that in other texts, which relate to the

future state, the election spoken of, is not an arbitrary choice of individuals, but of that class or description of persons, be it large or small, who shall comply with the prescribed terms of salvation ; in other words, it is a conditional, not an absolute election, and such that every individual, if he will, may be included in it. Milton has so far told us truth. We wish that we could add, that he had thrown new light on free agency. This great subject has indeed baffled as yet the deepest thinkers, and seems now to be consigned, with other sublime topics, under the sweeping denomination of 'metaphysics,' to general neglect. But let it not be given up in despair. The time is coming, when the human intellect is to strike into new fields, and to view itself and its Creator and the universe, from new positions, and we trust that the darkness which has so long hung over our moral nature will be gradually dispersed. This attribute of free agency, through which an intelligent being is strictly and properly a cause, an agent, an originator of moral good or moral evil, and not a mere machine, determined by outward influences, or by a secret, yet resistless efficiency of God, which virtually makes Him the author and sole author of all human actions—this moral freedom, which is the best image of the creative energy of the Deity, seems to us the noblest object of philosophical investigation. However questioned and darkened by a host of metaphysicians, it is recognised in the common consciousness of every human being. It is the ground of responsibility, the fountain of moral feeling. It is involved in all moral judgments and affections, and thus gives to social life its whole interest; whilst it is the chief tie between the soul and its Creator. The fact that philosophers have attempted to discard free agency from their explanations

of moral phenomena, and to subject all human action to necessity, to mechanical causes, or other extraneous influences, is proof enough, that the science of the mind has as yet penetrated little beneath the surface, that the depths of the soul are still unexplored.

Milton naturally passes from his chapter on the Supreme Being, to the consideration of those topics which have always been connected with this part of theology; we mean, the character of Jesus Christ, and the nature of the Holy Spirit. All our readers are probably aware that Milton has here declared himself an Anti-trinitarian, and strenuously asserted the strict and proper unity of God. His chapter on ‘The Son of God,’ is the most elaborate one in the work. His ‘prefatory remarks’ are highly interesting, as joining with a manly assertion of his right, an affectionate desire to conciliate the Christians from whom he differed.

‘I cannot enter upon subjects of so much difficulty as the *Son of God* and the *Holy Spirit*, without again premising a few introductory words. If indeed I were a member of the Church of Rome, which requires implicit obedience to its creed on all points of faith, I should have acquiesced from education or habit in its simple decree and authority, even though it denies that the doctrine of the trinity, as now received, is capable of being proved from any passage of scripture. But since I enrol myself among the number of those who acknowledge the word of God alone as the rule of faith, and freely advance what appears to me much more clearly deducible from the holy scriptures than the commonly received opinion, I see no reason why any one who belongs to the same Protestant or Reformed Church, and professes to acknowledge the same rule of faith as myself, should take offence at my freedom, particularly as I impose my authority on no one, but merely propose what I think more worthy of belief than the creed in general acceptation. I only entreat that my readers will ponder and examine my statements in a spirit which desires to discover nothing but the truth, and with a mind free from prejudice. For without intending to oppose the authority of scripture, which I consider inviolably sacred, I only take

upon myself to refute human interpretations as often as the occasion requires, conformably to my right, or rather to my duty, as a man. If indeed those with whom I have to contend, were able to produce direct attestation from Heaven to the truth of the doctrine which they espouse, it would be nothing less than impiety to venture to raise, I do not say a clamor, but so much as a murmur against it. But inasmuch as they can lay claim to nothing more than human powers, assisted by that spiritual illumination which is common to all, it is not unreasonable that they should on their part allow the privileges of diligent research and free discussion to another inquirer, who is seeking truth through the same means and in the same way as themselves, and whose desire of benefiting mankind is equal to their own.'

Vol. I. pp. 103—105.

Milton teaches, that the Son of God is a distinct being from God, and inferior to him, that he existed before the world was made, that he is the first of the creation of God, and that afterwards all other things were made by him, as the instrument or minister of his Father. He maintains, in agreement with Dr. Clarke, that the Holy Spirit is a person, an intelligent agent, but created and inferior to God. This opinion of Milton is the more remarkable, because he admits that, before the time of Christ, the Jews, though accustomed to the phrase, Holy Spirit, never attached to it the idea of personality, and that both in the Old and the New Testament, it is often used to express God himself, or his power and agency. It is strange, that after these concessions, he could have found a difficulty in giving a figurative interpretation to the few passages in the New Testament, which speak of the Holy Spirit as a person.

We are unable within our limits to give a sketch of Milton's strong reasoning against the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ. We must, however, pause a moment to thank God that he has raised up this illustrious advocate of the long obscured doctrine of the Divine Unity.

We can now bring forward the three greatest and noblest minds of modern times, and, we may add, of the christian era, as witnesses to that Great Truth, of which, in an humbler and narrower sphere, we desire to be the defenders. Our Trinitarian adversaries are perpetually ringing in our ears the names of Fathers and Reformers. We take Milton, Locke, and Newton, and place them in our front, and want no others to oppose to the whole array of great names on the opposite side. Before these intellectual suns, the stars of self-named Orthodoxy, 'hide their diminished heads.' To these eminent men God communicated such unusual measures of light and mental energy, that their names spring up spontaneously, when we think or would speak of the greatness of our nature. Their theological opinions were the fruits of patient, profound, reverent study of the scriptures. They came to this work, with minds not narrowed by a technical, professional education, but accustomed to broad views, to the widest range of thought. They were shackled by no party connexions. They were warped by no clerical ambition, and subdued by no clerical timidity. They came to this subject in the fulness of their strength, with free minds open to truth, and with unstained purity of life. They came to it in an age, when the doctrine of the trinity was instilled by education, and upheld by the authority of the church, and by penal laws. And what did these great and good men, whose intellectual energy and love of truth have made them the chief benefactors of the human mind, what, we ask, did they discover in the scriptures? a triple divinity? three infinite agents? three infinite objects of worship? three persons, each of whom possesses his own distinct offices, and yet shares equally in the godhead with the rest?* No! Scripture

joined with nature and with that secret voice in the heart, which even idolatry could not always stifle, and taught them to bow reverently before the One Infinite Father, and to ascribe to Him alone, supreme, self-existent divinity.—Our principal object in these remarks has been to show, that as far as great names are arguments, the cause of Anti-trinitarianism, or of God's proper Unity, is supported by the strongest. But we owe it to truth to say, that we put little trust in these fashionable proofs. The chief use of great names in religious controversy, is, to balance and neutralize one another, that the unawed and unfettered mind may think and judge with a due self-reverence, and with a solemn sense of accountableness to God alone.

We have called Milton an Anti-trinitarian. But we have no desire to identify him with any sect. His mind was too independent and universal to narrow itself to human creeds and parties. He is supposed to have separated himself, in his last years, from all the denominations around him; and were he now living, we are not sure that he would find one to which he would be strongly attracted. He would probably stand first among that class of Christians, more numerous than is supposed, and, we hope, increasing, who are too jealous of the rights of the mind, and too dissatisfied with the clashing systems of the age, to attach themselves closely to any party; in whom the present improved state of theology has created a consciousness of defect, rather than the triumph of acquisition; who, however partial to their own creed, cannot persuade themselves, that it is the ultimate attainment of the human mind, and that distant ages will repeat its articles as reverently as the Catholics do the decrees of Trent; who contend earnestly for free inquiry, not because all who inquire will think

as they do, but because some at least may be expected to outstrip them, and to be guides to higher truth. With this nameless and spreading class, we have strong sympathies. We want new light, and care not whence it comes ; we want reformers worthy of the name ; and we should rejoice in such a manifestation of Christianity, as would throw all present systems into obscurity.

We come now to a topic on which Milton will probably startle a majority of readers. He is totally opposed, as were most of the ancient philosophers, to the doctrine of God's creating the universe out of nothing. He maintains, that there can be no action without a passive material on which the act is exerted, and that accordingly the world was framed out of a preexistent matter. To the question, What and whence is this primary matter? he answers, It is from God, 'an efflux of the Deity.' 'It proceeded from God,' and consequently no additional existence was produced by creation, nor is matter capable of annihilation. A specimen of his speculations on this subject, is given in the following quotation.

'It is clear then that the world was framed out of matter of some kind or other. For since action and passion are relative terms, and since, consequently, no agent can act externally, unless there be some patient, such as matter, it appears impossible that God could have created this world out of nothing ; not from any defect of power on his part, but because it was necessary that something should have previously existed capable of receiving passively the exertion of the divine efficacy. Since, therefore, both scripture and reason concur in pronouncing that all these things were made, not out of nothing, but out of matter, it necessarily follows, that matter must either have always existed independently of God, or have originated from God at some particular point of time. That matter should have been always independent of God, (seeing that it is only a passive principle, dependent on the Deity, and subservient to him ; and seeing, moreover, that as in number, considered abstractly, so al-

so in time or eternity, there is no inherent force or efficacy,) that matter, I say, should have existed of itself from all eternity, is inconceivable. If, on the contrary, it did not exist from all eternity, it is difficult to understand from whence it derives its origin. There remains, therefore, but one solution of the difficulty, for which moreover we have the authority of scripture, namely, that all things are of God.'

Vol. I. pp. 236, 237.

This doctrine naturally led Milton to another; viz. that there is no ground for the supposed distinction between body and soul; for, if matter is an 'eflux of the Deity,' it is plainly susceptible of intellectual functions. Accordingly our author affirms,—

'That man is a living being, intrinsically and properly one and individual, not compound or separable, not, according to the common opinion, made up and framed of two distinct and different natures, as of soul and body,—but the whole man is soul, and the soul man; that is to say, a body, or substance, individual, animated, sensitive, and rational.'

Vol. I. pp. 250, 251.

We here learn that a passage in Paradise Lost, which we have admired as poetry, was deemed by Milton sound philosophy.

'O Adam, One Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not depraved from good, created all
Such to perfection, *one first matter all*,
Indued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life:
But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,
As nearer to him placed or nearer tending,
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More airy, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes; flowers and their fruit,
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To intellectual.'

Par. Lost, B. V. lines 469—185.

These speculations of Milton will be received in this age, with more favor or with less aversion, than in his own; for, from the time of Locke, the discussions of philosophers have tended to unsettle our notions of matter, and no man is hardy enough now to say, what it is, or what it may not be. The idealism of Berkeley, though it has never organized a sect, has yet sensibly influenced the modes of thinking among metaphysicians; and the coincidence of this system with the theory of certain Hindoo philosophers, may lead us to suspect, that it contains some great latent truth, of which the European and Hindoo intellect, so generally at variance, have caught a glimpse. Matter is indeed a Proteus, which escapes us at the moment we hope to seize it. Priestley was anxious to make the soul material; but for this purpose, he was obliged to change matter from a substance into a power, that is, into no matter at all; so that he destroyed, in attempting to diffuse it. We have thrown out these remarks, to rescue Milton's memory from the imputation, which he was the last^b man to deserve, of irreverence towards God; for of this some will deem him guilty in tracing matter to the Deity as its fountain. Matter, which seems to common people so intelligible, is still wrapped in mystery. We know it only by its relation to mind, or as an assemblage of powers to awaken certain sensations. Of its relation to God, we may be said to know nothing. Perhaps, as knowledge advances, we shall discover that the Creator is bound to his works by stronger and more intimate ties, than we now imagine. We do not then quarrel with such suggestions as Milton's, though we cannot but wonder at the earnestness with which he follows out such doubtful speculations.

Milton next proceeds to the consideration of man's state in Paradise, and as marriage was the only social relation then subsisting, he introduces here his views of that institution, and of polygamy and divorce. These views show, if not the soundness, yet the characteristic independence of his mind. No part of his book has given such offence as his doctrine of the lawfulness of polygamy, and yet nowhere is he less liable to reproach. It is plain that his error was founded on his reverence for scripture. He saw that polygamy was allowed to the best men in the Old Testament, to patriarchs before the law, who, he says, were the objects of God's special favor, and to eminent individuals in subsequent ages ; and finding no prohibition of it in the New Testament, he believed, that not only holy men would be traduced, but scripture dishonored, by pronouncing it morally evil. We are aware that some will say, that the practice *is* condemned in the New Testament ; and we grant that it is censured by implication in these words of Christ, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.' * But we believe it to be an indisputable fact, that although Christianity was first preached in Asia, which had been from the earliest ages the seat of polygamy, the apostles never denounced it as a crime, and never required their converts to put away all wives but one. 'What then ?' some may say, 'Are you too the advocates of the lawfulness of polygamy ?' We answer, No. We consider our religion as decidedly hostile to this practice ; and we add, what seems to us of great importance, that this hostility is not the less decided, because no express prohibition of

* Matt. xix. 9.

polygamy is found in the New Testament ; for Christianity is not a system of precise legislation, marking out with literal exactness everything to be done, and everything to be avoided ; but an inculcation of broad principles, which it intrusts to individuals and to society to be applied according to their best discretion. It is through this generous peculiarity, that Christianity is fitted to be a universal religion. Through this, it can subsist and blend itself with all stages of society, and can live in the midst of abuses, which it silently and powerfully overcomes, but against which it would avail little, were it immediately to lift up the voice of denunciation. We all know that long cherished corruptions, which have sent their roots through the whole frame of a community, cannot be torn up at once, without dissolving society. To Christianity is committed the sublime office of eradicating all the errors and evils of the world ; but this it does by a process corresponding with man's nature, by working a gradual revolution in the mind, which, in its turn, works a safe and effectual revolution in manners and life. No argument, therefore, in favor of a practice, can be adduced from the fact, that it is not explicitly reprobated in the New Testament. For example, Christianity went forth into communities, where multitudes were held in slavery, and all ranks were ground and oppressed by despotism ; abuses on which the spirit of our religion frowns as sternly as on any which can be named. Yet Christianity did not command the master to free his slaves, or the despot to descend from his absolute throne ; but satisfied itself with proclaiming sublime truths in regard to God's paternal character and administration, and broad and generous principles of action, leaving to these the work of breaking every chain, by a gradual, inward,

irresistible influence, and of asserting the essential equality and unalienable rights of the whole human race.—We cannot leave this topic, without adding, that not only Milton's error on polygamy, but many other noxious mistakes, have resulted from measuring Christianity by the condition of the primitive church, as if *that* were the standard of faith and practice, as if everything allowed then were wise and good, as if the religion were then unfolded in all its power and extent. The truth is, that Christianity was then in its infancy. The apostles communicated its great truths to the rude minds of Jews and Heathens; but the primitive church did not, and could not, understand all that was involved in those principles, all the applications of which they are susceptible, all the influences they were to exert on the human mind, all the combinations they were to form with the new truths which time was to unfold, all the new lights in which they were to be placed, all the adaptations to human nature and to more advanced states of society, which they were progressively to manifest. In the first age, the religion was administered with a wise and merciful conformity to the capacities of its recipients. With the progress of intelligence, and the developement of the moral faculties, Christianity is freeing itself, and ought to be freed, from the local, temporary, and accidental associations of its childhood. Its great principles are coming forth more distinctly and brightly, and condemning abuses and errors, which have passed current for ages. This great truth, for such we deem it, that Christianity is a growing light, and that it must be more or less expounded by every age for itself, was not sufficiently apprehended by Milton; nor is it now understood as it will be. For want of apprehending it, Christianity is

administered now, too much as it was in ages, when nothing of our literature, philosophy, and spirit of improvement existed; and consequently it does not, we fear, exert that entire and supreme sway over strong and cultivated minds, which is its due, and which it must one day obtain.

Milton has connected with polygamy the subject of divorce, on which he is known to have differed from many Christians. He strenuously maintains in the work under review, and more largely in other treatises, that the violation of the marriage bed is not the sole ground of divorce, but that the perpetual interruption of peace and affection by mutual differences and unkindness, is a sufficient reason for dissolving the conjugal relation. On this topic we cannot enlarge.

We now arrive at that part of Milton's work, in which his powerful mind might have been expected to look beyond the prevalent opinions of his day, but in which he has followed the beaten road, almost without deviation, seldom noticing difficulties, and hardly seeming to know their existence. We refer to the great subjects of the moral condition of mankind, and of redemption by Jesus Christ. The doctrine of original sin he has assumed as true, and his faith in it was evidently strengthened by his doctrine of the identity of the soul with the body, in consequence of which he teaches, that souls are propagated from parents to children, and not immediately derived from God, and that they are born with an hereditary taint, just as the body contracts hereditary disease. It is humbling to add, that he supports this doctrine of the propagation of sin by physical contagion, on the ground that it relieves the Creator from the charge of originating the corruption, which we are said to bring into life; as if the infinitely pure

and good God could, by a covert agency, infect with moral evil the passive and powerless mind of the infant, and then absolve himself of the horrible work by imputing it to instruments of his own ordination! Milton does not, however, believe in total depravity, feeling that this would free men from guilt, by taking away all power; and he therefore leaves us a portion of the divine image, not enough to give us a chance of virtue, but enough to take away excuse from sin. Such are the ‘tender mercies’ of theology! With respect to Christ’s mediation, he supposes, that Christ saves us by bearing our punishment, and in this way satisfying God’s justice. His views indeed are not expressed with much precision, and seem to have been formed without much investigation. On these great subjects, of human nature and redemption, we confess, we are disappointed in finding the spirit of Milton satisfying itself with the degrading notions which prevailed around him. But we remember, that it is the order of Providence, that the greatest minds should sympathize much with their age, and that they contribute the more to the progress of mankind, by not advancing too fast and too far beyond their contemporaries. In this part of his work, Milton maintains, that the death threatened to sin extends equally to body and soul, which indeed he was bound to do, as he holds the soul and body to be one; and he then proceeds to defend with his usual power the necessary inference, that all consciousness is suspended between death and the resurrection. We have no faith in this doctrine, but we respect the courage with which he admits and maintains whatever can be fairly deduced from his opinions.

Having concluded the subject of redemption, he passes to what he calls ‘man’s renovation, or the change

whereby the sinner is brought into a state of grace ;' and here, though he is not always perspicuous, yet he seldom deviates from what was then the beaten road. We owe it, however, to Milton, to say, that, although he sometimes approached, he never adopted Calvinism. All the distinguishing articles of that creed, total depravity, election and reprobation, Christ dying for the elect only, irresistible grace, the perseverance of the saints, and justification by mere faith, all are denied and opposed by him, and some with great strength. Swayed as Milton was by the age in which he lived, his spirit could not be subdued to the heart-withering faith of the Genu-
evan school.

We now come to a subject in which Milton was deeply interested; we mean Christian Liberty, under which head may be included the discipline of the church, the power of ministers, and the rights of the people. To vindicate the liberty of Christians, and to secure them from all outward impositions and ordinances, he maintains that the whole Mosaic law is abolished; so that no part is binding on Christians; a doctrine which may startle many, who believe that the moral precepts of that law are as binding now as ever. But such persons differ little in reality from Milton, whose true meaning is, that these precepts bind Christians, not through the authority of Moses, which is wholly done away, but only because they are taken up and incorporated into Christianity, which is our only law, and which has set forth whatever was permanently valuable in Judaism, in a more perfect form, and with more powerful sanctions.

As another branch of the liberty of Christians, he maintains, as we may well suppose, the right of every believer to consult the scriptures and to judge of them for himself. Not satisfied with this, he takes the ground

of Quakerism, and maintains that the Christian, in addition to the scriptures, has an inward guide, with which no human authority should interfere.

'Under the gospel we possess, as it were, a twofold scripture, one external, which is the written word, and the other internal, which is the Holy Spirit, written in the hearts of believers, according to the promise of God, and with the intent that it should by no means be neglected.' Vol. II. p. 172. 'The external scripture *** has been liable to frequent corruption, and in some instances has been corrupted, through the number, and occasionally the bad faith of those by whom it has been handed down, the variety and discrepancy of the original manuscripts, and the additional diversity produced by subsequent transcripts and printed editions. But the Spirit which leads to truth, cannot be corrupted, neither is it easy to deceive a man who is really spiritual.' p. 173. 'It is difficult to conjecture the purpose of Providence in committing the writings of the New Testament to such uncertain and variable guardianship, unless it were to teach us by this very circumstance, that the Spirit which is given to us, is a more certain guide than scripture, whom, therefore, it is our duty to follow.' p. 174. 'Hence it follows, that when an acquiescence in human opinions or an obedience to human authority in matters of religion is exacted, in the name either of the church or of the christian magistrate, from those who are themselves led individually by the spirit of God, this is in effect to impose a yoke, not on men, but on the Holy Spirit itself.' p. 176.

This, in words, is genuine Quakerism ; but whether Milton understood by the Holy Spirit that *immediate* revelation, which forms the leading doctrine of that creed, we doubt. To this doctrine it may be objected, and we think Milton must have felt the objection, that it disparages and discourages our faculties, and produces inaction of mind, leading men to expect from a sudden flash from Heaven, the truth which we are taught to seek by the right use of our own powers. We imagine that Milton believed that the Holy Spirit works with and by our own understandings, and, instead of superseding reason, invigorates and extends it. But this is

not the only place where his precise views are obscured by general expressions, or by rapid and superficial notices of subjects.

In Milton's views of the church and the ministry, we have other proofs of his construing the scriptures in the manner most favorable to christian liberty. He teaches that the universal church has no head but Christ, and that the power arrogated by popes, councils, and bishops, is gross usurpation. In regard to particular churches he is a strict Congregationalist. Each church, he says, is competent to its own government, and connected with others only by the bond of charity. No others are authorised to interfere with any of its concerns, but in the way of brotherly counsel.

' Every church consisting of the above parts,' i. e. well instructed believers, ' however small its numbers, is to be considered as in itself an integral and perfect church, so far as regards its religious rights ; nor has it any superior on earth, whether individual, or assembly, or convention, to whom it can be lawfully required to render submission; inasmuch as no believer out of its pale, nor any order or council of men whatever, has a greater right than itself, to expect a participation in the written word and the promises, in the presence of Christ, in the presiding influence of the Spirit, and in those gracious gifts which are the reward of united prayer.'

Vol. II. p. 194.

The choice of the minister, he says, belongs to the people. The minister, if possible, should serve the church gratuitously, and live by the labor of his own hands. This unpaid service he pronounces more noble and consonant to our Lord's example and that of the apostles. In accordance with these views, he favors the idea of a church consisting of few members.

' All that pertains to the worship of God and the salvation of believers, all, in short, that is necessary to constitute a church, may

be duly and orderly transacted in a particular church, within the walls of a private house, and where the numbers assembled are inconsiderable. Nay, such a church, when in compliance with the interested views of its pastor it allows of an increase of numbers beyond what is convenient, deprives itself in a great measure of the advantages to be derived from meeting in common.'

Vol. II. p. 194.

He maintains that ministers are not to monopolize public instruction, or the administration of the ordinances; but that all Christians, having sufficient gifts, are to participate in these services.

'The custom of holding assemblies is to be maintained, not after the present mode, but according to the apostolical institution, which did not ordain that an individual, and he a stipendiary, should have the sole right of speaking from a higher place, but that each believer in turn should be authorised to speak, or prophesy, or teach, or exhort, according to his gifts; insomuch that even the weakest among the brethren had the privilege of asking questions, and consulting the elders and more experienced members of the congregation.' Vol. II. p. 203. 'Any believer is competent to act as an ordinary minister, according as convenience may require, provided only he be endowed with the necessary gifts; these gifts constituting his mission.' p. 153. 'If therefore it be competent to any believer whatever to preach the gospel, provided he be furnished with the requisite gifts, it is also competent to him to administer the rite of baptism; inasmuch as the latter office is inferior to the former.' p. 157. 'With regard to the Lord's supper also, it has been shown, in the preceding chapter, that all are entitled to participate in that rite, but that the privilege of dispensing the elements is confined to no particular man, or order of men.' p. 158..

We entirely accord with the spirit of freedom which these passages breathe; but from some of the particular views we dissent. The great error of Milton lies in supposing that the primitive church was meant to be a model for all ages. But can we suppose that the church at its birth, when it was poor, persecuted, hemmed in by Judaism and Heathenism, supplied imper-

fectedly with written rules and records, dependent for instruction chiefly on inspired teachers, and composed of converts who had grown up and been steeped in Jewish and Heathen errors, can we imagine, that in these circumstances the church took a form which it ought to retain as sacred and unalterable, in its triumphs, and prosperity, and diffusion, and in ages of greater light and refinement? We know that in the first ages there were no ministers with salaries, or edifices for public worship. Christians met in private houses, and sometimes in the obscurest they could find. On these occasions, the services were not monopolized by an individual, but shared by the fraternity; nor is there a hint in the New Testament that the administration of the Lord's supper and baptism was confined to the minister. But in all this we have no rule for the present day. Indeed it seems to us utterly repugnant to the idea of a universal religion, intended for all ages and nations, and for all the progressive states of society to the end of the world, to suppose that in its infancy it established an order of worship, instruction, and discipline, which was to remain inviolable in all future times. This doctrine of an inflexible form, seems to us servile, superstitious, and disparaging to Christianity. Our religion it too spiritual and inward, and cares too little about its exterior, to bind itself in this everlasting chain. The acknowledged indefiniteness of the New Testament in regard to this subject, is no mean proof of the enlarged and prospective wisdom of its founder. We believe, that, with the diffusion of liberal views, the question will arise, whether our religion cannot be taught and administered in methods and forms more adapted, than those which now prevail, to its spirit and

great design, to the principles of human nature, and to the condition and wants of society. Among the changes which may grow from this discussion, we do not anticipate the adoption of Milton's plan of sentencing ministers to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow ; for we think that we see reasons, in the general spread of knowledge, for enlarging their means and opportunities of study and intellectual culture, that they may meet the increasing demand for more enlightened inculcation of christian truth. At the same time, it seems to us not unlikely, that, in conformity to Milton's suggestion, public instruction, instead of continuing to be a monopoly of ministers, may be extended freely to men of superior intelligence and piety, and that the results of this arrangement may be, the infusion of new life, power, and practical wisdom into religious teaching, and the substitution of a more natural, free, and various eloquence, for the technical and monotonous mode of treating subjects, which clings so often and so obstinately to the performances of the pulpit.—Again, we do not expect, among the changes of forms and outward worship, that Christians, to meet our author's views, will shut their churches and meet in private houses; for large religious edifices, and large congregations, seem to us among the important means of collecting and interesting in Christianity, the mass of the community. But perhaps narrower associations for religious improvement may be formed, in which the formalities of public worship will be relaxed, and Christians may reap the benefits of the more familiar and confidential meetings of the primitive converts. It is indeed a great question, how the public administration of Christianity, including modes of discipline, instruction, and worship, may be

rendered more impressive and effectual. This field is almost untrodden; but if we read aright the signs of the times, the day for exploring it draws nigh.

We have said that whilst we dissent from some of Milton's views on the subject of our present remarks, we agree in their spirit. It was evidently the aim of all his suggestions, to strip the clergy, as they are called, of that peculiar, artificial sanctity, with which superstition had long arrayed them, and which had made their simple, benignant office, one of the worst instruments of ambition and despotism. We believe that this institution will never exert its true and full power on the church and on the world, until the childish awe with which it has been viewed, shall be exchanged for enlightened esteem, and until men, instead of expecting from it certain mysterious, undefined influences, shall see in it a rational provision for promoting virtue and happiness, not by magic, but according to the fixed laws of human nature.

The remainder of the 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine,' furnishes topics on which we should willingly remark; but we have only time to glance at the opinions in which Milton differs from the majority. He rejects infant baptism, and argues against it with his usual earnestness and strength. He not only affirms with many other Christians, that the fourth commandment, relating to the Sabbath, is abolished with the rest of the Mosaic system, but maintains, what few have done, that under the gospel no time is appointed for public worship, but that the observance of the first day of the week rests wholly on expediency, and on the agreement of Christians. He believes, that Christ is to appear visibly for the judgment of the world, and that he will reign a thousand years on earth, at the end of

which period Satan will assail the church with an innumerable confederacy, and be overwhelmed with everlasting ruin. He speaks of the judgment as beginning with Christ's second advent, and as comprehending his whole government through the millenium, as well as the closing scene, when sentence will be pronounced on evil angels, and on the whole human race. We have now given, we believe, all the peculiarities of Milton's faith. As for that large part of his work in which he has accumulated scriptural proofs of doctrines and duties in which all Christians are agreed, its general tenor may be understood without further remarks.

It may now be asked, What is the value of this book ? We prize it chiefly as a testimony to Milton's profound reverence for the christian religion, and an assertion of the freedom and rights of the mind. We are obliged to say, that the work throws little new light on the great subjects of which it treats. Some will say, that this ought not to surprise us ; for new light is not to be looked for in the department of theology. But if this be true, our religion may be charged with the want of adaptation to our nature in an essential point ; for one of the most striking features of the human mind is its thirst for constantly enlarging knowledge, and its proneness to lose its interest in subjects which it has exhausted. The chief cause of Milton's failure, was, that he sought truth too exclusively in the past, and among the dead. He indeed called no man master, and disclaimed the authority of Fathers, and was evidently dissatisfied with all the sects which had preceded or were spread around him. Still he believed in the perfection of the primitive church, and that Christianity, instead of being carried forward, was to be carried *back* to its original purity. To use his own strik-

ing language, ‘the lovely form of Truth,’ which Christians at first embraced, ‘had been hewn into a thousand pieces, like the mangled body of Osiris, and scattered to the four winds;’ and consequently he believed, that the great duty of her friends, was, ‘to gather up limb by limb, and bring together every joint and member.’ In conformity with this doctrine, he acted too much as an eclectic theologian; culling something from almost every sect, and endeavouring to form an harmonious system from materials ‘gathered from the four winds.’ He would have done better, had he sought truth less in other minds, and more in the communion of his own soul with scripture, nature, God, and itself. The fact is, that the church, from its beginning, has been imperfect in knowledge and practice, and our business, is, not to rest in the past, but to use it as a means of a purer and brighter futurity. Christianity began to be corrupted at its birth, to be debased by earthly mixtures, as soon as it touched the earth. The seeds of that corruption which grew and shot up into the overshadowing despotism of papal Rome, were sown in the age of the apostles, as we learn in the Epistles; and we infer from the condition of the world, that nothing but a stupendous moral miracle, subverting all the laws of the human mind, could have prevented their development. Who, that understands human nature, does not know, that old associations are not broken up in a moment; that to minds, plunged in a midnight of error, truth must gradually open like the dawning day; that old views will mingle with the new; that old ideas, which we wish to banish, will adhere to the old words to which they were formerly attached; and that the sudden and entire eradication of long-rooted errors, would be equivalent to the creation of a new intellect?

How long did the apostles, under Christ's immediate tuition, withstand his instructions ! Even Peter, after the miraculous illumination of the day of Pentecost, remained ignorant, until the message from Cornelius, of that glorious feature of Christianity, the abolition of the Jewish peculiarity, and the equal participation of the Gentiles with the Jews in the blessings of the Messiah. As soon as Christianity was preached, it was blended with Judaism, which had power to neutralize the authority of Paul in many churches. In like manner, it soon began to be 'spoiled' of its simplicity, 'by philosophy and science falsely so called,' and to be encumbered by pagan ceremonies. The first Christians were indeed brought into 'wonderful light,' if their christian state be compared with the darkness from which they had emerged ; but not if compared with the perfection of knowledge to which Christ came to exalt the human race. The earliest Fathers, as we learn from their works, were not receptive of large communications of truth. Their writings abound in puerilities and marks of childish credulity, and betray that indistinctness of vision, which is experienced by men who issue from thick darkness into the light of day. In the ages of barbarism which followed the fall of the Roman empire, Christianity, though it answered wise purposes of Providence, was more and more disfigured and obscured. The Reformation was indeed a glorious era, but glorious for its reduction of papal and clerical power, and for the partial liberation of the mind, rather than for immediate improvements of men's apprehensions of Christianity. Some of the Reformers invented or brought back as injurious errors as those they overthrew. Luther's consubstantiation differed from the pope's transubstantiation by a syllable, and

that was all the gain ; and we may safely say, that transubstantiation was a less monstrous doctrine than the five points of Calvin. How vain, therefore, was Milton's search for ‘the mangled Osiris,’ for ‘the lovely form and immortal features of Truth,’ in the history of the church !

Let us not be misunderstood, as if we would cut off the present age from the past. We mean not, that Milton should have neglected the labors of his predecessors. He believed justly, that all the periods and generations of the human family, are bound together by a sublime connexion, and that the wisdom of each age is chiefly a derivation from all preceding ages, not excepting the most ancient, just as a noble stream, through its whole extent and in its widest overflowings, still holds communication with its infant springs, gushing out perhaps in the depths of distant forests, or on the heights of solitary mountains. We only mean to say, that the stream of religious knowledge is to swell and grow through its whole course, and to receive new contributions from gifted minds in successive generations. We only regret that Milton did not draw more from the deep and full fountains of his own soul. We wish only to teach, that antiquity was the infancy of our race, and that its acquisitions, instead of being rested in, are to bear us onward to new heights of truth and virtue. We mean not to complain of Milton for not doing more. He rendered to mankind a far greater service than that of a teacher of an improved theology. He taught and exemplified that spirit of intellectual freedom, through which all the great conquests of truth are to be achieved, and by which the human mind is to attain to a new consciousness of its sublime faculties, and to invigorate and expend itself forever.

We here close our remarks on Milton. In offering this tribute, we have aimed at something higher than to express and gratify our admiration of an eminent man. We believe that an enlightened and exalted mind is a brighter manifestation of God than the outward universe ; and we have set forth, as we have been able, the praises of an illustrious servant of the Most High, that through him, glory may redound to the Father of all spirits, the Fountain of all wisdom and magnanimous virtue. And still more ; we believe that the sublime intelligence of Milton was imparted, not for his own sake only, but to awaken kindred virtue and greatness in other souls. Far from regarding him as standing alone and unapproachable, we believe that he is an illustration of what all who are true to their nature, will become in the progress of their being ; and we have held him forth, not to excite an ineffectual admiration, but to stir up our own and others' breasts to an exhilarating pursuit of high and ever-growing attainments in intellect and virtue.

REMARKS

LIFE AND CHARACTER

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

1827—8.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

THE Life of Napoleon Bonaparte by Sir Walter Scott has been anticipated with an eagerness, proportioned to the unrivalled powers of the author, and to the wonderful endowments and fortunes of the hero. That the general expectation has been satisfied, we cannot affirm. But few will deny, that the writer has given us a monument of his great talents. The rapidity with which such a work has been thrown off astonishes us. We think, however, that the author owed to himself and to the public, a more deliberate execution of this important undertaking. He should either have abandoned it, or have bestowed on it the long and patient labor which it required. The marks of negligence and haste, which are spread through the work, are serious blemishes, and to more fastidious readers inexpiable defects. It wants compression and selection throughout. Many passages are encumbered with verbiage. Many thoughts are weakened by useless expansion and worse than useless repetition. Comparisons are accumulated to excess, and whilst many are exquisite, perhaps as many are trite and unworthy of history.

The remarks are generally just, but obvious. We state these defects plainly, that we may express the more freely our admiration of the talents, which have executed so rapidly, a work so extensive and various, so rich in information, so fresh and vivid in description, and furnishing such abundant specimens of a free, graceful, and vigorous style.

The work has the great merit of impartiality. It is probably inaccurate in many of its details, but singularly free from prejudice and passion. Not a few, who considered that the author was both a Briton and a friend of the principles and policy of Pitt, were expecting from his pen a discolored delineation of the implacable foe of England and of that great minister. But the rectitude of his mind, and his reverence for historical truth, have effectually preserved him from abusing the great power, conferred on him by his talents, over public opinion. We think that his laudable fear of wronging the enemy of his country, joined to an admiration of the dazzling qualities of Napoleon, has led him to soften unduly the crimes of his hero, and to give more favorable impressions than truth will warrant.

But enough of the author, who needs not our praise, and can suffer little by our censure. Our concern is with his subject. A just estimate of the late emperor of France seems to us important. That extraordinary man, having operated on the world with unprecedented power during his life, is now influencing it by his character. That character, we apprehend, is not viewed as it should be. The kind of admiration which it inspires, even in free countries, is a bad omen. The greatest crime against society, that of spoiling it of its rights and loading it with chains, still fails to move that deep abhorrence, which is its due; and which, if really

felt, would fix on the usurper a brand of indelible infamy. Regarding freedom as the chief interest of human nature, as essential to its intellectual, moral, and religious progress, we look on men, who have signalized themselves by their hostility to it, with an indignation at once stern and sorrowful, which no glare of successful war, and no admiration of the crowd, can induce us to suppress. We mean then to speak freely of Napoleon. But if we know ourselves, we could on no account utter one unjust reproach. We speak the more freely, because conscious of exemption from every feeling like animosity. We war not with the dead. We would resist only what we deem the pernicious influence of the dead. We would devote ourselves to the cause of freedom and humanity, a cause perpetually betrayed by the admiration lavished on prosperous crime and all-grasping ambition. Our great topic will be the Character of Napoleon; and with this we shall naturally intersperse reflections on the great interests which he perpetually influenced.

We begin with observing, that it is an act of justice to Bonaparte to remember, that he grew up under disastrous influences, in a troubled day, when men's minds were convulsed, old institutions overthrown, old opinions shaken, old restraints snapped asunder; when the authority of religion was spurned, and youth abandoned to unwonted license; when the imagination was made feverish by visions of indistinct good, and the passions swelled by the sympathy of millions to a resistless torrent. A more dangerous school for the character cannot well be conceived. That all-seeing Being, who knows the trials of his creatures and the secrets of the heart, can alone judge to what degree crimes are extenuated by circumstances so inauspicious.

This we must remember in reviewing the history of men, who were exposed to trials unknown to ourselves. But because the turpitude of an evil agent is diminished by infelicities of education or condition, we must not therefore confound the immutable distinctions of right and wrong, and withhold our reprobation from atrocities which have spread misery and slavery far and wide.

It is also due to Napoleon to observe, that there has always existed, and still exists, a mournful obtuseness of moral feeling in regard to the crimes of military and political life. The wrong-doing of public men on a large scale, has never drawn upon them that sincere, hearty abhorrence which visits private vice. Nations have seemed to court aggression and bondage, by their stupid, insane admiration of successful tyrants. The wrongs, from which men have suffered most, in body and mind, are yet unpunished. True; Christianity has put into our lips censures on the aspiring and the usurping. But these reproaches are as yet little more than sounds, and unmeaning commonplaces. They are repeated for form's sake. When we read or hear them, we feel that they want depth and strength. They are not inward, solemn, burning convictions, breaking from the indignant soul with a tone of reality, before which guilt would cower. The true moral feeling in regard to the crimes of public men is almost to be created. We believe, then, that such a character as Bonaparte's, is formed with very little consciousness of its turpitude; and society, which contributes so much to its growth, is responsible for its existence, and merits in part the misery which it spreads.

Of the early influences, under which Bonaparte was formed, we know little. He was educated in a mili-

tary school, and this, we apprehend, is not an institution to form much delicacy, or independence of moral feeling; for the young soldier is taught, as his first duty, to obey his superior without consulting his conscience; to take human life at another's bidding; to perform that deed, which above all others requires deliberate conviction, without a moment's inquiry as to its justice; and to place himself a passive instrument in hands, which, as all history teaches, often reek with blood causelessly shed.

His first political association was with the Jacobins, the most sanguinary of all the factions which raged in France, and whose sway is emphatically called ‘the reign of terror.’ The service which secured his command in Italy, was the turning of his artillery on the people, who, however dangerous when acting as a mob, happened in the present case to understand their rights, and were directing their violence against manifest usurpation.

His first campaign was in Italy, and we have still a vivid recollection of the almost rapturous admiration, with which we followed his first triumphs; for then we were simple enough to regard him as the chosen guardian of liberty. His peculiar tactics were not then understood; the secret of his success had not reached us; and his rapid victories stimulated the imagination to invest him with the mysterious powers of a hero of romance. We confess that we cannot now read the history of his Italian wars without a quickened movement in the veins. The rapidity of his conceptions; the inexhaustibleness of his invention; the energy of his will; the decision which suffered not a moment's pause between the purpose and its execution; the presence of mind, which, amidst sudden reverses and on

the brink of ruin, devised the means of safety and success ; these commanding attributes, added to a courage, which, however suspected afterwards, never faltered then, compel us to bestow, what indeed we have no desire to withhold, the admiration which is due to superior power.

Let not the friends of peace be offended. We have said, and we repeat it, that we have no desire to withhold our admiration from the energies, which war often awakens. Great powers, even in their perversion, attest a glorious nature, and we may feel their grandeur, whilst we condemn, with our whole strength of moral feeling, the evil passions by which they are depraved. We are willing to grant that war, abhor it as we may, often develops and places in strong light, a force of intellect and purpose, which raises our conceptions of the human soul. There is perhaps no moment in life, in which the mind is brought into such intense action, in which the will is so strenuous, and in which irrepressible excitement is so tempered with self-possession, as in the hour of battle. Still the greatness of the warrior is poor and low compared with the magnanimity of virtue. It vanishes before the greatness of principle. The martyr to humanity, to freedom, or religion ; the unshinking adherent of despised and deserted truth, who, alone, unsupported, and scorned, with no crowd to infuse into him courage, no variety of objects to draw his thoughts from himself, no opportunity of effort or resistance to rouse and nourish energy, still yields himself calmly, resolutely, with invincible philanthropy, to bear prolonged and exquisite suffering, which one retracting word might remove—such a man is as superior to the warrior, as the tranquil and boundless heavens above us, to the low earth we tread beneath our feet.

We have spoken of the energies of mind called forth by war. If we may be allowed a short digression, which however bears directly on our main subject, the merits of Napoleon, we would observe, that military talent, even of the highest order, is far from holding the first place among intellectual endowments. It is one of the lower forms of genius ; for it is not conversant with the highest and richest objects of thought. We grant that a mind, which takes in a wide country at a glance, and understands, almost by intuition, the positions it affords for a successful campaign, is a comprehensive and vigorous one. The general, who disposes his forces so as to counteract a greater force ; who supplies by skill, science, and invention, the want of numbers ; who dives into the counsels of his enemy, and who gives unity, energy, and success to a vast variety of operations, in the midst of casualties and obstructions which no wisdom could foresee, manifests great power. But still the chief work of a general is to apply physical force ; to remove physical obstructions ; to avail himself of physical aids and advantages ; to act on matter ; to overcome rivers, ramparts, mountains, and human muscles ; and these are not the highest objects of mind, nor do they demand intelligence of the highest order ; and accordingly nothing is more common than to find men, eminent in this department, who are wanting in the noblest energies of the soul ; in habits of profound and liberal thinking, in imagination and taste, in the capacity of enjoying works of genius, and in large and original views of human nature and society. The office of a great general does not differ widely from that of a great mechanician, whose business it is to frame new combinations of physical forces, to adapt them to new circumstances, and to remove

new obstructions. Accordingly great generals, away from the camp, are often no greater men than the mechanician taken from his workshop. In conversation they are often dull. Deep and refined reasonings they cannot comprehend. We know that there are splendid exceptions. Such was Cesar, at once the greatest soldier and the most sagacious statesman of his age, whilst, in eloquence and literature, he left behind him almost all, who had devoted themselves exclusively to these pursuits. But such cases are rare. The conqueror of Napoleon, the hero of Waterloo, possesses undoubtedly great military talents; but we do not understand, that his most partial admirers claim for him a place in the highest class of minds. We will not go down for illustration to such men as Nelson, a man great on the deck, but debased by gross vices, and who never pretended to enlargement of intellect. To institute a comparison in point of talent and genius between such men and Milton, Bacon, and Shakspeare, is almost an insult on these illustrious names. Who can think of these truly great intelligences; of the range of their minds through heaven and earth; of their deep intuition into the soul; of their new and glowing combinations of thought; of the energy with which they grasped and subjected to their main purpose, the infinite materials of illustration which nature and life afford—who can think of the forms of transcendent beauty and grandeur which they created, or which were rather emanations of their own minds; of the calm wisdom and fervid imagination which they conjoined; of the voice of power, in which, ‘though dead, they still speak,’ and awaken intellect, sensibility, and genius in both hemispheres—who can think of such men, and not feel the immense inferiority of the most gifted warrior,

whose elements of thought are physical forces and physical obstructions, and whose employment is the combination of the lowest class of objects, on which a powerful mind can be employed.

We return to Napoleon. His splendid victories in Italy spread his name like lightning through the civilized world. Unhappily they emboldened him to those unprincipled and open aggressions, to the indulgence of that lawless, imperious spirit, which marked his future course, and kept pace with his growing power. In his victorious career, he soon came in contact with states, some of which, as Tuscany and Venice, had acknowledged the French Republic, whilst others, as Parma and Modena, had observed a strict neutrality. The old-fashioned laws of nations, under which such states would have found shelter, seemed never to have crossed the mind of the young victor. Not satisfied with violating the neutrality of all, he seized the port of Leghorn, and ruined the once flourishing commerce of Tuscany; and having exacted heavy tribute from Parma and Modena, he compelled these powers to surrender, what had hitherto been held sacred in the utmost extremities of war, some of their choicest pictures, the chief ornaments of their capitals. We are sometimes told of the good done by Napoleon to Italy. But we have heard his name pronounced as indignantly there as here. An Italian cannot forgive him for robbing that country of its noblest works of art, its dearest treasures and glories, which had made it a land of pilgrimage to men of taste and genius from the whole civilized world, and which had upheld and solaced its pride under conquest and humiliation. From this use of power in the very dawn of his fortunes, it might easily have been foretold, what part he would act in the stormy day

which was approaching, when the sceptre of France and Europe was to be offered to any strong hand, which should be daring enough to grasp it.

Next to Italy, Egypt became the stage for the display of Napoleon ; Egypt, a province of the Grand Signior, with whom France was in profound peace, and who, according to the long established relations of Europe, was her natural ally. It would seem, that this expedition was Bonaparte's own project. His motives are not very distinctly stated by his biographer. We doubt not that his great aim was conspicuousness. He chose a theatre where all eyes could be turned upon him. He saw that the time for usurpation had not yet come in France. To use his own language, 'the fruit was not yet ripe.' He wanted a field of action which would draw upon him the gaze of the world, and from which he might return at the favorable moment for the prosecution of his enterprises at home. At the same time he undoubtedly admitted into his mind, which success had already intoxicated, some vague wild hope of making an impression on the Eastern world, which might place its destinies at his command, and give him a throne more enviable than Europe could bestow. His course in the East exhibited the same lawlessness, the same contempt of all restraints on his power, which we have already noted. No means, which promised success, were thought the worse for their guilt. It was not enough for him to boast of his triumphs over the cross, or to profess Mahometanism. He claimed inspiration, and a commission from God, and was anxious to join the character of prophet to that of hero. This was the beginning of the great weaknesses and errors into which he was betrayed by that spirit of self-exaggeration, which, under the influence of past success

and of unbounded flattery, was already growing into a kind of insanity. In his own view he was fit to be a compeer with Mahomet. His greatness in his own eyes made him blind to the folly of urging his supernatural claims on the Turk, who contemned, even more than he abhorred, a Frank ; and who would sooner have sold himself a slave to Christians, than have acknowledged a renegade Christian as a sharer of the glories of Mahomet. It was not enough for Bonaparte, on this expedition, to insult God, to show an impiety as foolish as it was daring. He proceeded to trample on the sentiments and dictates of humanity with equal hardihood. The massacre of Jaffa is universally known. Twelve hundred prisoners, and probably more, who had surrendered themselves to Napoleon, and were apparently admitted to quarter, were two days afterwards marched out of the fort, divided into small bodies, and then deliberately shot, and, in case the musket was not effectual, were despatched by bayonets. This was an outrage, which cannot be sheltered by the laws and usages of war, barbarous as they are. It was the deed of a bandit and savage, and ought to be execrated by good men, who value and would preserve the mitigations which Christianity has infused into the conduct of national hostilities.

The next great event in Bonaparte's history was the usurpation of the supreme power of the state, and the establishment of military despotism over France. On the particulars of this criminal act we have no desire to enlarge, nor are we anxious to ascertain, whether our hero, on this occasion, lost his courage and self-possession, as he is reported to have done. We are more anxious to express our convictions of the turpitude of this outrage on liberty and justice. For this crime but

one apology can be offered. Napoleon, it is said, seized the reins, when, had he let them slip, they would have fallen into other hands. He enslaved France at a moment, when, had he spared her, she would have found another tyrant. Admitting the truth of the plea, what is it but the reasoning of the highwayman, who robs and murders the traveller, because the booty was about to be seized by another hand, or because another dagger was ready to do the bloody deed? We are aware that the indignation, with which we regard this crime of Napoleon, will find a response in few breasts; for to the multitude a throne is a temptation which no virtue can be expected to withstand. But moral truth is immovable amidst the sophistry, ridicule, and abject reasonings of men, and the time will come, when it will find a meet voice to give it utterance. Of all crimes against society, usurpation is the blackest. He who lifts a parricidal hand against his country's rights and freedom; who plants his foot on the necks of thirty millions of his fellow creatures; who concentrates in his single hand the powers of a mighty empire; and who wields its powers, squanders its treasures, and pours forth its blood like water, to make other nations slaves and the world his prey—this man, as he unites all crimes in his sanguinary career, so he should be set apart by the human race for their unminglel and unmeasured abhorrence, and should bear on his guilty head a mark as opprobrious as that which the first murderer wore. We cannot think with patience of one man fastening chains on a whole people, and subjecting millions to his single will; of whole regions overshadowed by the tyranny of a frail being like ourselves. In anguish of spirit we exclaim, How long will an abject world kiss the foot which tramples it?

How long shall crime find shelter in its very aggravations and excess?

Perhaps it may be said, that our indignation seems to light on Napoleon, not so much because he was a despot, as because he became a despot by usurpation; that we seem not to hate tyranny itself, so much as a particular mode of gaining it. We do indeed regard usurpation as a crime of peculiar blackness, especially when committed, as in the case of Napoleon, in the name of liberty. All despotism, however, whether usurped or hereditary, is our abhorrence. We regard it as the most grievous wrong and insult to the human race. But towards the hereditary despot we have more of compassion than indignation. Nursed and brought up in delusion, worshipped from his cradle, never spoken to in the tone of fearless truth, taught to look on the great mass of his fellow beings as an inferior race, and to regard despotism as a law of nature and a necessary element of social life; such a prince, whose education and condition almost deny him the possibility of acquiring healthy moral feeling and manly virtue, must not be judged severely. Still, in absolving the despot from much of the guilt which seems at first to attach to his unlawful and abused power, we do not the less account despotism a wrong and a curse. The time for its fall, we trust, is coming. It cannot fall too soon. It has long enough wrung from the laborer his hard earnings; long enough squandered a nation's wealth on its parasites and minions; long enough warred against the freedom of the mind, and arrested the progress of truth. It has filled dungeons enough with the brave and good, and shed enough of the blood of patriots. Let its end come. It cannot come too soon.

We have now followed Bonaparte to the moment of possessing himself of the supreme power. Those who were associated with him in subverting the government of the Directory, essayed to lay restraints on the First Consul, who was to take their place. But he indignantly repelled them. He held the sword, and with this, not only intimidated the selfish, but awed and silenced the patriotic, who saw too plainly, that it could only be wrested from him by renewing the horrors of the revolution.—We now proceed to consider some of the means, by which he consolidated his power, and raised it into the imperial dignity. We consider these as much more important illustrations of his character than his successive campaigns, to which accordingly we shall give little attention.

One of his first measures for giving stability to his power, was certainly a wise one, and was obviously dictated by his situation and character. Having seized the first dignity in the state by military force, and leaning on a devoted soldiery, he was under no necessity of binding himself to any of the parties which had distracted the country, a vassalage to which his domineering spirit could ill have stooped. Policy and his love of mastery pointed out to him an indiscriminate employment of the leading men of all parties; and not a few of these had become so selfish and desperate in the disastrous progress of the revolution, that they were ready to break up old connexions, and to divide the spoils of the Republic with a master. Accordingly he adopted a system of comprehension and lenity, from which even the emigrants were not excluded, and had the satisfaction of seeing almost the whole talent which the revolution had quickened, leagued in the execution of his plans. Under the able men, whom he called to his aid, the

finances and the war department, which had fallen into a confusion that threatened ruin to the state, were soon restored to order, and means and forces provided for retrieving the recent defeats and disgraces of the French armies.

This leads us to mention another and most important and effectual means by which Napoleon secured and enlarged his power. We refer to the brilliant campaign immediately following his elevation to the Consulate, and which restored to France the ascendancy which she had lost during his absence. On his success at this juncture his future fortunes wholly depended. It was in this campaign that he proved himself the worthy rival of Hannibal. The energy which conducted an army with its cavalry, artillery, and supplies, across the Alps, by untried paths, which only the chamois hunter, born and bred amidst glaciers and everlasting snows, had trodden, gave the impression, which of all others he most desired to spread, of his superiority to nature, as well as to human opposition. This enterprise was in one view a fearful omen to Europe. It showed a power over the minds of his soldiers, the effects of which were not to be calculated. The conquest of St. Bernard by a French army was the boast of the nation; but a still more wonderful thing was, the capacity of the general to inspire into that army the intense force, confidence, resolution, and patience, by which alone the work could be accomplished. The victory of Marengo, gained by one of the accidents of war in the moment of apparent defeat and ruin, secured to Bonaparte the dominion which he coveted. France, who, in her madness and folly, had placed her happiness in conquest, now felt that the glory of her arms was safe only in the hands of the First Consul; whilst the soldiery, who

held the sceptre in their gift, became more thoroughly satisfied, that triumph and spoils waited on his standard.

Another important and essential means of securing and building up his power, was the system of *espionage*, called the Police, which, under the Directory, had received a developement worthy of those friends of freedom, but which was destined to be perfected by the wisdom of Napoleon. It would seem as if despotism, profiting by the experience of ages, had put forth her whole skill and resources in forming the French police, and had framed an engine, never to be surpassed, for stifling the faintest breathings of disaffection, and chaining every free thought. This system of *espionage*, (we are proud that we have no English word for the infernal machine,) had indeed been used under all tyrannies. But it wanted the craft of Fouché, and the energy of Bonaparte, to disclose all its powers. In the language of our author, ‘it spread through all the ramifications of society;’ that is, every man, of the least importance in the community, had the eye of a spy upon him. He was watched at home as well as abroad, in the *boudoir* and theatre, in the brothel and gaming house; and these last named haunts furnished not a few ministers of the Argus-eyed Police. There was an ear open through all France to catch the whispers of discontent; a power of evil, which aimed to rival, in omnipresence and invisibility, the benignant agency of the Deity. Of all instruments of tyranny, this is the most detestable. It chills social intercourse; locks up the heart; infects and darkens men’s minds with mutual jealousies and fears; and reduces to system a wary dissimulation, subversive of force and manliness of character. We find, however, some consolation in learning that tyrants

are the prey of distrust, as well as the people over whom they set this cruel guard ; that tyrants cannot confide in their own spies, but must keep watch over the machinery which we have described, lest it recoil upon themselves. Bonaparte at the head of an army is a dazzling spectacle ; but Bonaparte, heading a horde of spies, compelled to doubt and fear these base instruments of his power, compelled to divide them into bands, and to receive daily reports from each, so that by balancing them against each other and sifting their testimony, he might gather the truth ; Bonaparte, thus employed, is anything but imposing. It requires no great elevation of thought to look down on such an occupation with scorn ; and we see, in the anxiety and degradation which it involves, the beginning of that retribution which tyranny cannot escape.

Another means by which the First Consul protected his power can excite no wonder. That he should fetter the press, should banish or imprison refractory editors, should subject the journals and more important works of literature to jealous superintendence, these were things of course. Free writing and despotism are such implacable foes, that we hardly think of blaming a tyrant for keeping no terms with the press. He cannot do it. He might as reasonably choose a volcano for the foundation of his throne. Necessity is laid upon him, unless he is in love with ruin, to check the bold and honest expression of thought. But the necessity is his own choice ; and let infamy be that man's portion, who seizes a power which he cannot sustain, but by dooming the mind through a vast empire to slavery, and by turning the press, that great organ of truth, into an instrument of public delusion and debasement.

We pass to another means of removing obstructions to his power and ambition, still worse than the last. We refer to the terror which he spread by his severities, just before assuming the imperial power. The murder of the Duke d'Enghien was justified by Napoleon as a method of striking fear into the Bourbons, who, as he said, were plotting his death. This may have been one motive; for we have reason to think that he was about that time threatened with assassination. But we believe still more, that he intended to awe into acquiescence the opposition, which, he knew, would be awakened in many breasts, by the prostration of the forms of the republic, and the open assumption of the imperial dignity. There were times when Bonaparte disclaimed the origination of the murder of the Duke d'Enghien. But no other could have originated it. It bears internal marks of its author. The boldness, decision, and overpowering rapidity of the crime, point unerringly to the soul where it was conceived. We believe that one great recommendation of this murder, was, that it would strike amazement and terror into France and Europe, and show that he was prepared to shed any blood, and to sweep before him every obstruction, in his way to absolute power. Certain it is, that the open murder of the Duke d'Enghien, and the justly suspected assassinations of Pichegru and Wright, did create a dread, such as had not been felt before; and whilst on previous occasions some faint breathings of liberty were to be heard in the legislative bodies, only one voice, that of Carnot, was raised against investing Bonaparte with the imperial crown, and laying France, an unprotected victim, at his feet.

There remain for our consideration other means employed by Bonaparte for building up and establishing

his power, of a different character from those we have named, and which on this account we cannot pass without notice. One of these was the Concordat which he extorted from the Pope, and which professed to re-establish the Catholic religion in France. Our religious prejudices have no influence on our judgment of this measure. We make no objections to it, as the restoration of a worship which on many accounts we condemn. We view it now simply as an instrument of policy, and in this light, it seems to us no proof of the sagacity of Bonaparte. It helps to confirm in us an impression, which other parts of his history give us, that he did not understand the peculiar character of his age, and the peculiar and original policy which it demanded. He always used commonplace means of power, although the unprecedented times in which he lived, required a system, which should combine untried resources, and touch new springs of action. Because old governments had found a convenient prop in religion, Napoleon imagined that it was a necessary appendage and support of his sway, and resolved to restore it. But at this moment there were no foundations in France for a religious establishment, which could give strength and a character of sacredness to the supreme power. There was comparatively no faith, no devout feeling, and still more, no superstition to supply the place of these. The time for the reaction of the religious principle had not yet arrived; and a more likely means of retarding it could hardly have been devised, than the nursing care extended to the church by Bonaparte, the recent Mussulman, the known despiser of the ancient faith, who had no worship at heart but the worship of himself. Instead of bringing religion to the aid of the state, it was impossible that

such a man should touch it, without loosening the faint hold which it yet retained on the people. There were none so ignorant as to be the dupes of the First Consul in this particular. Every man, woman, and child knew that he was playing the part of a juggler. Not one religious association could be formed with his character or government. It was a striking proof of the self-exaggerating vanity of Bonaparte, and of his ignorance of the higher principles of human nature, that he not only hoped to revive and turn to his account the old religion, but imagined, that he could, if necessary, have created a new one. ‘Had the Pope never existed before, he should have been made for the occasion,’ was the speech of this political charlatan; as if religious opinion and feeling were things to be manufactured by a consular decree. Ancient legislators, by adopting and sympathizing with popular and rooted superstitions, were able to press them into the service of their institutions. They were wise enough to build on a pre-existing faith, and studiously to conform to it. Bonaparte, in a country of infidelity and atheism, and whilst unable to refrain from sarcasms on the system which he patronised, was weak enough to believe that he might make it a substantial support of his government. He undoubtedly congratulated himself on the terms, which he exacted from the Pope, and which had never been conceded to the most powerful monarchs; forgetting that his apparent success was the defeat of his plans; for just as far as he severed the church from the supreme pontiff, and placed himself conspicuously at its head, he destroyed the only connexion which could give it influence. Just so far its power over opinion and conscience ceased. It became a coarse instrument of state, contemned by the people, and serv-

ing only to demonstrate the aspiring views of its master. Accordingly the French bishops in general refused to hold their dignities under this new head, preferred exile to the sacrifice of the rights of the church, and left behind them a hearty abhorrence of the Concordat among the more zealous members of their communion. Happy would it have been for Napoleon, had he left the Pope and the church to themselves. By occasionally recognising and employing, and then insulting and degrading the Roman pontiff, he exasperated a large part of Christendom, fastened on himself the brand of impiety, and awakened a religious hatred which contributed its full measure to his fall.

As another means employed by Bonaparte for giving strength and honor to his government, we may name the grandeur of his public works, which he began in his consulate and continued after his accession to the imperial dignity. These dazzled France, and still impress travellers with admiration. Could we separate these from his history, and did no other indication of his character survive, we should undoubtedly honor him with the title of a beneficent sovereign ; but connected as they are, they do little or nothing to change our conceptions of him as an all-grasping, unprincipled usurper. Paris was the chief object of these labors ; and surely we cannot wonder, that he who aimed at universal dominion, should strive to improve and adorn the metropolis of his empire. It is the practice of despots to be lavish of expense on the royal residence and the seat of government. Travellers in France, as in other countries of the continent, are struck and pained by the contrast between the magnificent capital and the mud-walled village and uninteresting province. Bonaparte had a special motive for decorating Paris, for 'Paris is

France,' as has often been observed ; and in conciliating the vanity of the great city, he secured the obedience of the whole country. The boasted internal improvements of Napoleon scarcely deserve to be named, if we compare their influence with the operation of his public measures. The conscription, which drew from agriculture its most effective laborers, and his continental system, which sealed up every port and annihilated the commerce of his empire, drained and exhausted France to a degree, for which his artificial stimulants of industry, and his splendid projects afforded no compensation.* Perhaps the most admired of all his public works, is the road over the Simplon, to which all travellers concur in giving the epithet, stupendous. But it ought not to amaze us, that he, who was aspiring at unlimited dominion, should establish communications between the different provinces of his empire. It ought not to amaze us, that he, who had scaled the glaciers of St. Bernard, should covet some easier passage for pouring his troops into Italy ; nor is it very wonderful, that a sovereign, who commanded the revenues of Europe, and who lived in an age when civil engineering had been advanced to a perfection before unknown, should accomplish a bolder enterprise than his predecessors. We would add, that Napoleon must divide with Fabbroni the glory of the road over the Simplon ; for the genius, which contrived and constructed, is more properly its author, than the will which commanded it.

There is however one great work, which gives Bonaparte a fair claim on the gratitude of posterity, and entitles him to an honorable renown. We refer to the new code of laws, which was given to France under his auspices. His participation in this work has indeed been exorbitantly and ridiculously magnified. Be-

cause he attended the meetings of the commissioners to whom it was assigned, and made some useful and sagacious suggestions, he has been praised, as if he had struck out, by the miraculous force of his genius, a new code of laws. The truth is, that he employed for this work, as he should have done, the most eminent civilians of the empire ; and it is also true that these learned men have little claim to originality ; for, as our author observes, the code ‘has few peculiarities making a difference between its principles and those of the Roman law.’ In other words, they preferred wisdom to novelty. Still Bonaparte deserves great praise for his interest in the work, for the impulse he gave to those to whom it was committed, and for the time and thought, which, amidst the cares of a vast empire, he bestowed upon it. That his ambition incited him to this labor, we doubt not. He meant to entwine the laurels of Justinian with those of Alexander. But we will not quarrel with ambition, when it is wise enough to devote itself to the happiness of mankind. In the present case, he showed that he understood something of true glory ; and we prize the instance more, because it stands almost alone in his history. We look on the conqueror, the usurper, the spoiler of kingdoms, the insatiable despot, with disgust, and see in all these characters an essential vulgarness of mind. But when we regard him as a Fountain of Justice to a vast empire, we recognise in him a resemblance to the just and benevolent Deity, and cheerfully accord to him the praise of bestowing on a nation one of the greatest gifts, which it is permitted to man to confer. It was however the misery of Bonaparte, a curse brought on him by his crimes, that he could touch nothing without leaving on it the polluting mark of despotism. His usurpation

took from him the power of legislating with magnanimity, where his own interest was concerned. He could provide for the administration of justice between man and man, but not between the citizen and the ruler. Political offences, the very class which ought to be submitted to a jury, were denied that mode of trial. Juries might decide on other criminal questions; but they were not to be permitted to interpose between the despot and the ill fated subjects, who might fall under his suspicion. These were arraigned before 'special tribunals, invested with a half military character,' the ready ministers of nefarious prosecutions, and only intended to cloak by legal forms the murderous purpose of the tyrant.

We have thus considered some of the means by which Bonaparte consolidated and extended his power. We now see him advanced to that imperial throne, on which he had long fixed his eager eye. We see France alternately awed and dazzled by the influences we have described, and at last surrendering, by public, deliberate acts, without a struggle or a show of opposition, her rights, liberties, interests, and power to an absolute master and to his posterity forever. Thus perished the name and forms of the Republic. Thus perished the hopes of philanthropy. The air, which a few years ago resounded with the shouts of a great people casting away their chains, and claiming their birthright of freedom, now rung with the servile cries of long life to a blood-stained usurper. There were indeed generous spirits, true patriots, like our own La Fayette, still left in France. But few and scattered, they were left to shed in secret the tears of sorrowful and indignant despair. By this base and disastrous issue of their revo-

lution, the French nation not only renounced their own rights, but brought reproach on the cause of freedom, which years cannot wash away. This is to us a more painful recollection, than all the desolations which France spread through Europe, and than her own bitter sufferings, when the hour of retribution came upon her. The fields which she laid waste are again waving with harvest ; and the groans which broke forth through her cities and villages, when her bravest sons perished by thousands and ten thousands on the snows of Russia, have died away, and her wasted population is renewed. But the wounds which she inflicted on freedom by the crimes perpetrated in that sacred name, and by the abject spirit with which that sacred cause was deserted, are still fresh and bleeding. France not only subjected herself to a tyrant, but what is worse, she has given tyranny everywhere new pleas and arguments, and emboldened it to preach openly, in the face of heaven, the impious doctrines of absolute power and unconditional submission.

Napoleon was now Emperor of France ; and a man unacquainted with human nature, would think that such an empire, whose bounds now extended to the Rhine, might have satisfied even an ambitious man. But Bonaparte obeyed that law of progress, to which the highest minds are peculiarly subjected ; and acquisition inflamed, instead of appeasing, the spirit of dominion. He had long proposed to himself the conquest of Europe, of the world ; and the title of Emperor added intensity to this purpose. Did we not fear, that by repetition we might impair the conviction which we are most anxious to impress, we would enlarge on the enormity of the guilt involved in the project of universal empire. Napoleon knew distinctly the price, which he

must pay for the eminence which he coveted. He knew that the path to it lay over wounded and slaughtered millions, over putrefying heaps of his fellow creatures, over ravaged fields, smoking ruins, pillaged cities. He knew that his steps would be followed by the groans of widowed mothers and famished orphans; of bereaved friendship and despairing love; and that in addition to this amount of misery, he would create an equal amount of crime, by multiplying indefinitely the instruments and participants of his rapine and fraud. He knew the price and resolved to pay it. But we do not insist on a topic, which few, very few as yet, understand or feel. Turning then for the present from the moral aspect of this enterprise, we will view it in another light, which is of great importance to a just estimate of his claims on admiration. We will inquire into the nature and fitness of the measures and policy which he adopted, for compassing the subjugation of Europe and the world.

We are aware, that this discussion may expose us to the charge of great presumption. It may be said that men, having no access to the secrets of cabinets, and no participation in public affairs, are not the best judges of the policy of such a man as Napoleon. This we are not anxious to disprove. We do not deny the disadvantages of our position, nor shall we quarrel with our readers for questioning the soundness of our opinions. But we will say, that though distant, we have not been indifferent observers of the great events of our age, and that though conscious of exposure to many errors, we have a strong persuasion of the substantial correctness of our views. We express then, without reserve, our belief, that the policy of Napoleon was wanting in sagacity, and that he proved himself incapable, as we

before suggested, of understanding the character and answering the demands of his age. His system was a repetition of old means, when the state of the world was new. The sword and the police, which had sufficed him for enslaving France, were not the only powers required for his designs against the human race. Other resources were to be discovered or created ; and the genius for calling them forth did not, we conceive, belong to Napoleon.

The circumstances under which Napoleon aspired to universal empire, differed in many respects from those under which former conquerors were placed. It was easy for Rome, when she had subdued kingdoms, to reduce them to provinces and to govern them by force ; for nations at that period were bound together by no tie. They had little communication with each other. Differences of origin, of religion, of manners, of language, of modes of warfare ; differences aggravated by long and ferocious wars, and by the general want of civilisation, prevented joint action, and almost all concern for one another's fate. Modern Europe, on the other hand, was an assemblage of civilized states, closely connected by commerce, by literature, by a common faith, by interchange of thoughts and improvements, and by a policy which had for ages proposed, as its chief object, the establishment of such a balance of power as would secure national independence. Under these influences the human mind had made great progress ; and in truth the French revolution had resulted from an unprecedented excitement and development of men's faculties, and from the extension of power and intelligence through a vastly wider class, than had participated in them at any former period. The ~~new~~ power, which Napoleon was wielding, might be ~~due~~ to an enthusiasm essentially

generous, and manifesting a tendency of the civilized world to better institutions. It is plain that the old plans of conquest, and the maxims of comparatively barbarous ages, did not suit such a state of society. An ambitious man was to make his way, by allying himself with the new movements and excitements of the world. The existence of a vast maritime power like England, which, by its command of the ocean and its extensive commerce, was brought into contact with every community, and which at the same time enjoyed the enviable preeminence of possessing the freest institutions in Europe, was of itself a sufficient motive for a great modification of the policy, by which one state was now to be placed at the head of the nations. The peculiar character and influence of England, Bonaparte seemed indeed never able to comprehend; and the violent measures, by which he essayed to tear asunder the old connexions of that country with the continent, only gave them strength, by adding to the ties of interest those of sympathy, of common suffering, and common danger.

Force and corruption were the great engines of Napoleon, and he plied them without disguise or reserve, not caring how far he insulted and armed against himself, the moral and national feelings of Europe. His great reliance was on the military spirit and energy of the French people. To make France a nation of soldiers was the first and main instrument of his policy; and here he was successful. The revolution indeed had in no small degree done this work to his hands. To complete it, he introduced a national system of education, having for its plain end to train the whole youth of France to a military life, to familiarize the mind to this destination from its earliest years, and

to associate the idea of glory almost exclusively with arms. The conscription gave full efficacy to this system ; for as every young man in the empire had reason to anticipate a summons to the army, the first object in education naturally was, to fit him for the field. The public honors bestowed on military talent, and a rigorous impartiality in awarding promotion to merit, so that no origin, however obscure, was a bar to what were deemed the highest honors of Europe, kindled the ambition of the whole people into a flame, and directed it exclusively to the camp. It is true, the conscription, which thinned so terribly the ranks of her youth, and spread anxiety and bereavement through all her dwellings, was severely felt in France. But Napoleon knew the race whom it was his business to manage ; and by the glare of victory, and the title of the Grand Empire, he succeeded in reconciling them for a time to the most painful domestic privations, and to an unexampled waste of life. Thus he secured, what he accounted the most important instrument of dominion, a great military force. But, on the other hand, the stimulants, which, for this purpose, he was forced to apply perpetually to French vanity, the ostentation with which the invincible power of France was trumpeted to the world, and the haughty vaunting style which became the most striking characteristic of that intoxicated people, were perpetual irritations of the national spirit and pride of Europe, and implanted a deep hatred towards the new and insulting empire, which waited but for a favorable moment to repay with interest the debt of humiliation.

The condition of Europe forbade, as we believe, the establishment of universal monarchy by mere physical force. The sword, however important, was now to

play but a secondary part. The true course for Napoleon seems to us to have been indicated, not only by the state of Europe, but by the means which France in the beginning of her revolution had found most effectual. He should have identified himself with some great interests, opinion, or institutions, by which he might have bound to himself a large party in every nation. He should have contrived to make at least a specious cause against all old establishments. To contrast himself most strikingly and most advantageously with former governments, should have been the key of his policy. He should have placed himself at the head of a new order of things, which should have worn the face of an improvement of the social state. Nor did the subversion of republican forms prevent his adoption of this course, or of some other which would have secured to him the sympathy of multitudes. He might still have drawn some broad lines between his own administration and that of other states, tending to throw the old dynasties into the shade. He might have cast away the ancient pageantry and forms, distinguished himself by the simplicity of his establishments, and exaggerated the relief which he gave to his people, by saving them the burdens of a wasteful and luxurious court. He might have insisted on the great benefits that had accrued to France from the establishment of uniform laws, which protected alike all classes of men; and he might have virtually pledged himself to the subversion of the feudal inequalities which still disfigured Europe. He might have insisted on the favorable changes to be introduced into property, by abolishing the entails which fettered it, the rights of primogeniture, and the exclusive privileges of a haughty aristocracy. He might have found abuses enough against which to array himself as a

champion. By becoming the head of new institutions, which would have involved the transfer of power into new hands, and would have offered to the people a real improvement, he might everywhere have summoned to his standard the bold and enterprising, and might have disarmed the national prejudices to which he fell a prey. Revolution was still the true instrument of power. In a word, Napoleon lived at a period, when he could only establish a durable and universal control, through principles and institutions of some kind or other, to which he would seem to be devoted.

It was impossible, however, for such a man as Napoleon, to adopt, perhaps to conceive, a system such as has now been traced ; for it was wholly at war with that egotistical, self-relying, self-exaggerating principle, which was the most striking feature of his mind. He imagined himself able, not only to conquer nations, but to hold them together by the awe and admiration which his own character would inspire ; and this bond he preferred to every other. An indirect sway, a control of nations by means of institutions, principles, or prejudices, of which he was to be only the apostle and desender, was utterly inconsistent with that vehemence of will, that passion for astonishing mankind, and that persuasion of his own invincibility, which were his master feelings, and which made force his darling instrument of dominion. He chose to be the great, palpable, and sole bond of his empire ; to have his image reflected from every establishment ; to be the centre, in which every ray of glory should meet, and from which every impulse should be propagated. In consequence of this egotism, he never dreamed of adapting himself to the moral condition of the world. The sword was his chosen weapon, and he used it without

disguise. He insulted nations as well as sovereigns. He did not attempt to gild their chains, or to fit the yoke gently to their necks. The excess of his extortions, the audacity of his claims, and the insolent language in which Europe was spoken of as the vassal of the great empire, discovered, that he expected to reign, not only without linking himself with the interests, prejudices, and national feelings of men, but by setting all at defiance.

It would be easy to point out a multitude of instances in which he sacrificed the only policy by which he could prevail, to the persuasion, that his own greatness could more than balance whatever opposition his violence might awaken. In an age in which Christianity was exerting some power, there was certainly a degree of deference due to the moral convictions of society. But Napoleon thought himself more than a match for the moral instincts and sentiments of our nature. He thought himself able to cover the most atrocious deeds by the splendor of his name, and even to extort applause for crimes by the brilliancy of his success. He took no pains to conciliate esteem. In his own eyes he was mightier than conscience; and thus he turned against himself the power and resentment of virtue, in every breast where that divine principle yet found a home.

Through the same blinding egotism, he was anxious to fill the thrones of Europe with men bearing his own name, and to multiply everywhere images of himself. Instead of placing over conquered countries efficient men, taken from themselves, who, by upholding better institutions, would carry with them large masses of the people, and who would still, by their hostility to the old dynasties, link their fortunes with his own; he placed over nations such men as Jerome and Murat.

He thus spread a jealousy of his power, whilst he rendered it insecure ; for as none of the princes of his creation, however well disposed, were allowed to identify themselves with their subjects, and to take root in the public heart, but were compelled to act, openly and without disguise, as satellites and prefects of the French emperor ; they gained no hold on their subjects, and could bring no strength to their master in his hour of peril. In none of his arrangements did Napoleon think of securing to his cause the attachment of nations. Astonishment, awe, and force, were his weapons, and his own great name the chosen pillar of his throne.

So far was Bonaparte from magnifying the contrast and distinctions between himself and the old dynasties of Europe, and from attaching men to himself by new principles and institutions, that he had the great weakness, for so we view it, to revive the old forms of monarchy, and to ape the manners of the old court, and thus to connect himself with the herd of legitimate sovereigns. This was not only to rob his government of that imposing character which might have been given to it, and of that interest which it might have inspired as an improvement on former institutions, but was to become competitor in a race in which he could not but be distanced. He could indeed pluck crowns from the heads of monarchs ; but he could not by any means infuse their blood into his veins, associate with himself the ideas which are attached to a long line of ancestry, or give to his court the grace of manners, which belongs to older establishments. His true policy was, to throw contempt on distinctions, which he could not rival ; and had he possessed the genius and spirit of the founder of a new era, he would have substituted for a crown, and for other long worn badges of power, a new and simple

style of grandeur, and new insignia of dignity, more consonant with an enlightened age, and worthy of one who disdained to be a vulgar king. By the policy which he adopted, if it be worthy of that name, he became a vulgar king, and showed a mind incapable of answering the wants and demands of his age. It is well known, that the progress of intelligence had done much in Europe, to weaken men's reverence for pageantry and show. Nobles had learned to lay aside their trappings in ordinary life, and to appear as gentlemen. Even royalty had begun to retrench its pomp ; and in the face of all this improvement, Bonaparte stooped from his height, to study costumes, to legislate about court dresses and court manners, and to outshine his brother monarchs in their own line. He desired to add the glory of master of ceremonies to that of conqueror of nations. In his anxiety to belong to the cast of kings, he exacted scrupulously the observance and etiquette with which they are approached. Not satisfied with this approximation to the old sovereigns, with whom he had no common interest, and from whom he could not have removed himself too far, he sought to ally himself by marriage with the royal families in Europe, to ingraft himself and his posterity on an old imperial tree. This was the very way to turn back opinion into its old channels ; to carry back Europe to its old prejudices ; to facilitate the restoration of its old order ; to preach up legitimacy ; to crush every hope that he was to work a beneficent change among nations. It may seem strange that his egotism did not preserve him from the imitation of antiquated monarchy. But his egotism, though excessive, was not lofty, nor was it seconded by a genius, rich and inventive, except in war.

We have now followed Napoleon to the height of his power, and given our views of the policy by which he hoped to make that power perpetual and unbounded. His fall is easily explained. It had its origin in that spirit of self-reliance and self-exaggeration, of which we have seen so many proofs. It began in Spain. That country was a province in reality. He wanted to make it one in name ; to place over it a Bonaparte ; to make it a more striking manifestation of his power. For this purpose, he ‘ kidnapped ’ its royal family, stirred up the unconquerable spirit of its people, and, after shedding on its plains and mountains the best blood of France, lost it forever. Next came his expedition against Russia, an expedition against which his wisest counsellors remonstrated, but which had every recommendation to a man who regarded himself as an exception to his race, and able to triumph over the laws of nature. So insane were his self-confidence and impatience of opposition, that he drove by his outrages Sweden, the old ally of France, into the arms of Russia, at the very moment that he was about to throw himself into the heart of that mighty empire. On his Russian campaign we have no desire to enlarge. Of all the mournful pages of history, none are more sad than that which records the retreat of the French army from Moscow. We remember, that when the intelligence of Napoleon’s discomfiture in Russia first reached this country, we were among those who exulted in it, thinking only of the results. But when subsequent and minuter accounts brought distinctly before our eyes that unequalled army of France, broken, famished, slaughtered, seeking shelter under snowdrifts, and perishing by intense cold, we looked back on our joy with almost a consciousness of guilt, and expiated by a sin-

cere grief our insensibility to the sufferings of our fellow creatures. We understand that many interesting notices of Napoleon, as he appeared in this disastrous campaign, are given in the Memoirs of Count Segur, a book, from which we have been repelled by the sorrows and miseries which it details. We can conceive few subjects more worthy of Shakspeare than the mind of Napoleon, at the moment, when his fate was sealed ; when the tide of his victories was suddenly stopped and rolled backwards ; when his dreams of invincibleness were broken as by a peal of thunder ; when the word, which had awed nations, died away, on the bleak waste, a powerless sound ; and when he, whose spirit Europe could not bound, fled in fear from a captive's doom. The shock must have been tremendous to a mind so imperious, scornful, and unschooled to humiliation. The intense agony of that moment when he gave the unusual orders, to retreat ; the desolation of his soul, when he saw his brave soldiers, and his chosen guards sinking in the snows, and perishing in crowds around him ; his unwillingness to receive the details of his losses, lest self-possession should fail him ; the levity and badinage of his interview with the Abbé de Pradt at Warsaw, discovering a mind laboring to throw off an insupportable weight, wrestling with itself, struggling against misery ; and though last not least, his unconquerable purpose, still clinging to lost empire as the only good of life ; these workings of such a spirit would have furnished to the great dramatist a theme, worthy of his transcendent powers.

By the irretrievable disasters of the Russian campaign, the empire of the world was effectually placed beyond the grasp of Napoleon. The tide of conquest had ebbed, never to return. The snail which had

bound the nations was dissolved. He was no longer the Invincible. The weight of military power, which had kept down the spirit of nations, was removed, and their long smothered sense of wrong and insult broke forth like the fires of a volcano. Bonaparte might still, perhaps, have secured the throne of France; but that of Europe was gone. This, however, he did not, could not, would not understand. He had connected with himself too obstinately the character of the world's master, to be able to relinquish it. Amidst the dark omens which gathered round him, he still saw in his past wonderful escapes, and in his own exaggerated energies, the means of rebuilding his fallen power. Accordingly the thought of abandoning his pretensions does not seem to have crossed his mind, and his irreparable defeat was only a summons to new exertion.— We doubt, indeed, whether Napoleon, if he could have understood fully his condition, would have adopted a different course. Though despairing, he would probably have raised new armies, and fought to the last. To a mind, which has placed its whole happiness in having no equal, the thought of descending to the level even of kings is intolerable. Napoleon's mind had been stretched by such ideas of universal empire, that France, though reaching from the Rhine to the Pyrenes, seemed narrow to him. He could not be shut up in it. Accordingly, as his fortunes darkened, we see no signs of relenting. He could not wear, he said, 'a tarnished crown,' that is, a crown no brighter than those of Austria and Russia. He continued to use a master's tone. He showed no change, but such as opposition works in the obstinate; he lost his temper and grew sour. He heaped reproaches on his marshals, and the legislative body. He insulted Metternich, the statesman, on whom,

above all others, his fate depended. He irritated Murat by sarcasms, which rankled within him, and accelerated, if they did not determine, his desertion of his master. It is a striking example of retribution, that the very vehemence and sternness of his will, which had borne him onward to dominion, now drove him to the rejection of terms which might have left him a formidable power, and thus made his ruin entire. Refusing to take counsel of events, he persevered in fighting with a stubbornness, which reminds us of a spoiled child, who sullenly grasps what he knows he must relinquish, struggles without hope, and does not give over resistance, until his little fingers are one by one unclenched from the object on which he has set his heart. Thus fell Napoleon. We shall follow his history no farther. His retreat to Elba, his irruption into France, his signal overthrow, and his banishment to St. Helena, though they add to the romance of his history, throw no new light on his character, and would of course contribute nothing to our present object. There are indeed incidents in this portion of his life which are somewhat inconsistent with the firmness and conscious superiority which belonged to him. But a man, into whose character so much impulse, and so little principle entered, must not be expected to preserve unblemished, in such hard reverses, the dignity and self-respect of an emperor and a hero.

In the course of these remarks, our views of the Conqueror, of the First Consul, and of the Emperor, have been given plainly and freely. The subject, however, is so important and interesting, that we have thought it worth our while, though at the hazard of some repetition, to bring together, in a narrower com-

pass, what seem to us the great leading features of the intellectual and moral character of Napoleon Bonaparte.

His intellect was distinguished by rapidity of thought. He understood by a glance what most men, and superior men, could learn only by study. He darted to a conclusion rather by intuition than reasoning. In war, which was the only subject of which he was master, he seized in an instant on the great points of his own and his enemy's positions ; and combined at once the movements, by which an overpowering force might be thrown with unexpected fury on a vulnerable part of the hostile line, and the fate of an army be decided in a day. He understood war as a science ; but his mind was too bold, rapid, and irrepressible, to be enslaved by the technics of his profession. He found the old armies fighting by rule, and he discovered the true characteristic of genius, which, without despising rules, knows when and how to break them. He understood thoroughly the immense moral power, which is gained by originality and rapidity of operation. He astonished and paralysed his enemies by his unforeseen and impetuous assaults, by the suddenness with which the storm of battle burst upon them ; and, whilst giving to his soldiers the advantages of modern discipline, breathed into them, by his quick and decisive movements, the enthusiasm of ruder ages. This power of disheartening the foe, and of spreading through his own ranks a confidence, and exhilarating courage, which made war a pastime, and seemed to make victory sure, distinguished Napoleon in an age of uncommon military talent, and was one main instrument of his future power.

The wonderful effects of that rapidity of thought by which Bonaparte was marked, the signal success of his new mode of warfare, and the almost incredible speed

with which his fame was spread through nations, had no small agency in fixing his character and determining for a period the fate of empires. These stirring influences infused a new consciousness of his own might. They gave intensity and audacity to his ambition; gave form and substance to his indefinite visions of glory, and raised his fiery hopes to empire. The burst of admiration, which his early career called forth, must in particular have had an influence, in imparting to his ambition that modification by which it was characterized, and which contributed alike to its success and to its fall. He began with *astonishing* the world, with producing a sudden and universal sensation, such as modern times had not witnessed. To *astonish* as well as to sway by his energies, became the great aim of his life. Henceforth to rule was not enough for Bonaparte. He wanted to amaze, to dazzle, to overpower men's souls, by striking, bold, magnificent, and unanticipated results. To govern ever so absolutely would not have satisfied him, if he must have governed silently. He wanted to reign through wonder and awe, by the grandeur and terror of his name, by displays of power which would rivet on him every eye, and make him the theme of every tongue. Power was his supreme object, but a power which should be gazed at as well as felt, which should strike men as a prodigy, which should shake old thrones as an earthquake, and by the suddenness of its new creations should awaken something of the submissive wonder which miraculous agency inspires.

Such seems to us to have been the distinction, or characteristic modification of his love of fame. It was a diseased passion for a kind of admiration, which, from the principles of our nature, cannot be enduring, and

which demands for its support perpetual and more stimulating novelty. Mere esteem he would have scorned. Calm admiration, though universal, and enduring, would have been insipid. He wanted to electrify and overwhelm. He lived for effect. The world was his theatre, and he cared little what part he played, if he might walk the sole hero on the stage, and call forth bursts of applause, which would silence all other fame. In war the triumphs which he coveted were those, in which he seemed to sweep away his foes like a whirlwind; and the immense and unparalleled sacrifice of his own soldiers, in the rapid marches and daring assaults to which he owed his victories, in no degree diminished their worth to the victor. In peace, he delighted to hurry through his dominions; to multiply himself by his rapid movements; to gather at a glance the capacities of improvement which every important place possessed; to suggest plans which would startle by their originality and vastness; to project in an instant, works which a life could not accomplish, and to leave behind the impression of a superhuman energy.

Our sketch of Bonaparte would be imperfect indeed, if we did not add, that he was characterized by nothing more strongly than by the spirit of *self-exaggeration*. The singular energy of his intellect and will, through which he had mastered so many rivals and foes, and overcome what seemed insuperable obstacles, inspired a consciousness of being something more than man. His strong original tendencies to pride and self-exaltation, fed and pampered by strange success and unbounded applause, swelled into an almost insane conviction of superhuman greatness. In his own view, he stood apart from other men. He was not to be measured by the standard of humanity. He was not to be retarded

by difficulties to which all others yielded. He was not to be subjected to laws and obligations which all others were expected to obey. Nature and the human will were to bend to his power. He was the child and favorite of fortune, and if not the lord, the chief object of destiny. His history shows a spirit of self-exaggeration, unrivalled in enlightened ages, and which reminds us of an Oriental king to whom incense had been burnt from his birth as to a deity. This was the chief source of his crimes. He wanted the sentiment of a common nature with his fellow beings. He had no sympathies with his race. That feeling of brotherhood, which is developed in truly great souls with peculiar energy, and through which they give up themselves willing victims, joyful sacrifices, to the interests of mankind, was wholly unknown to him. His heart, amidst its wild beatings, never had a throb of disinterested love. The ties which bind man to man he broke asunder. The proper happiness of a man, which consists in the victory of moral energy and social affection over the selfish passions, he cast away for the lonely joy of a despot. With powers, which might have made him a glorious representative and minister of the beneficent Divinity, and with natural sensibilities which might have been exalted into sublime virtues, he chose to separate himself from his kind, to forego their love, esteem, and gratitude, that he might become their gaze, their fear, their wonder; and for this selfish, solitary good, parted with peace and imperishable renown.

This insolent exaltation of himself above the race to which he belonged, broke out in the beginning of his career. His first success in Italy gave him the tone of a master, and he never laid it aside to his last hour. One can hardly help being struck with the *natural* man-

ner with which he arrogates supremacy in his conversation and proclamations. We never feel as if he were putting on a lordly air. In his proudest claims, he speaks from his own mind, and in native language. His style is swollen, but never strained, as if he were conscious of playing a part above his real claims. Even when he was foolish and impious enough to arrogate miraculous powers and a mission from God, his language showed that he thought there was something in his character and exploits to give a color to his blasphemous pretensions. The empire of the world seemed to him to be in a measure his due, for nothing short of it corresponded with his conceptions of himself; and he did not use mere verbiage, but spoke a language to which he gave some credit, when he called his successive conquests 'the fulfilment of his destiny.'

This spirit of self-exaggeration wrought its own misery, and drew down upon him terrible punishments; and this it did by vitiating and perverting his high powers. First, it diseased his fine intellect, gave imagination the ascendancy over judgment, turned the inventiveness and fruitfulness of his mind into rash, impatient, restless energies, and thus precipitated him into projects, which, as the wisdom of his counsellors pronounced, were fraught with ruin. To a man whose vanity took him out of the rank of human beings, no foundation for reasoning was left. All things seemed possible. His genius and his fortune were not to be bounded by the barriers, which experience had assigned to human powers. Ordinary rules did not apply to him. He even found excitement and motives in obstacles, before which other men would have wavered; for these would enhance the glory of triumph, and give a new thrill to the admiration of the world. According-

ly he again and again plunged into the depths of an enemy's country, and staked his whole fortune and power on a single battle. To be rash was indeed the necessary result of his self-exalting and self-relying spirit; for to dare what no other man would dare, to accomplish what no other man would attempt, was the very way to display himself as a superior being in his own and others' eyes.—To be impatient and restless was another necessary issue of the attributes we have described. The calmness of wisdom was denied him. He, who was next to omnipotent in his own eyes, and who delighted to strike and astonish by sudden and conspicuous operations, could not brook delay or wait for the slow operations of time. A work, which was to be gradually matured, by the joint agency of various causes, could not suit a man, who wanted to be felt as the great, perhaps only, cause; who wished to stamp his own agency in the most glaring characters on whatever he performed; and who hoped to rival by a sudden energy the steady and progressive works of nature. Hence so many of his projects were never completed, or only announced. They swelled however the tide of flattery, which ascribed to him the completion of what was not yet begun, whilst his restless spirit, rushing to new enterprises, forgot its pledges, and left the promised prodigies of his creative genius to exist only in the records of adulation.—Thus the rapid and inventive intellect of Bonaparte was depraved, and failed to achieve a growing and durable greatness. It reared indeed a vast and imposing structure, but disproportioned, disjointed, without strength, without foundations. One strong blast was enough to shake and shatter it, nor could his genius uphold it. Happy would it have been for his fame, had he been buried in its ruins!

One of the striking properties of Bonaparte's character was decision, and this, as we have already seen, was perverted, by the spirit of self-exaggeration, into an inflexible stubbornness, which counsel could not enlighten, nor circumstances bend. Having taken the first step, he pressed onward. His purpose he wished others to regard as a law of nature, or a decree of destiny. It *must* be accomplished. Resistance but strengthened it ; and so often had resistance been overborne, that he felt as if his unconquerable will, joined to his matchless intellect, could vanquish all things. On such a mind the warnings of human wisdom and of Providence were spent in vain ; and the Man of Destiny lived to teach others, if not himself, the weakness and folly of that all-defying decision, which arrays the purposes of a mortal with the immutability of the counsels of the Most High.

A still more fatal influence of the spirit of self-exaggeration which characterized Bonaparte, remains to be named. It depraved to an extraordinary degree his moral sense. It did not obliterate altogether the ideas of duty, but, by a singular perversion, it impelled him to apply them exclusively to others. It never seemed to enter his thought, that he was subject to the great obligations of morality, which all others are called to respect. He was an exempted being. Whatever stood in his way to empire, he was privileged to remove. Treaties only bound his enemies. No nation had rights but his own France. He claimed a monopoly in perfidy and violence. He was not naturally cruel; but when human life obstructed his progress, it was a lawful prey, and murder and assassination occasioned as little compunction as war. ~~The~~ most luminous exposition of his moral code was given in his counsels to the king of

Holland. ‘Never forget, that in the situation to which my political system and the interests of my empire have called you, your first duty is towards ME, your second towards France. All your other duties, even those towards the people whom I have called you to govern, rank after these.’ To his own mind he was the source and centre of duty. He was too peculiar and exalted, to be touched by that vulgar stain, called guilt. Crimes ceased to be such, when perpetrated by himself. Accordingly he always speaks of his transgressions as of indifferent acts. He never imagined that they tarnished his glory, or diminished his claim on the homage of the world. In St. Helena, though talking perpetually of himself, and often reviewing his guilty career, we are not aware that a single compunction escapes him. He speaks of his life as calmly as if it had been consecrated to duty and beneficence, whilst in the same breath he has the audacity to reproach unsparingly the faithlessness of almost every individual and nation, with whom he had been connected. We doubt whether history furnishes so striking an example of the moral blindness and obduracy to which an unbounded egotism exposes and abandons the mind.

His spirit of self-exaggeration was seen in his openness to adulation. Policy indeed prompted him to put his praises into the mouths of the venal slaves, who administered his despotism. But flattery would not have been permitted to swell into exaggerations, now nauseous, now ludicrous, and now impious, if, in the bosom of the chief, there had not lodged a flatterer who sounded a louder note of praise than all around him. He was remarkably sensitive to opinion, and resented as a wrong the suppression of his praises. The press of all countries was watched, and free states were called upon

to curb it for daring to take liberties with his name. Even in books published in France on general topics, he expected a recognition of his authority. Works of talent were suppressed, when their authors refused to offer incense at the new shrine. He resolved indeed to stamp his name on the literature, as on the legislation, policy, warfare of his age, and to compel genius, whose pages survive statues, columns, and empires, to take a place among his tributaries.

We close our view of Bonaparte's character, by saying, that his original propensities, released from restraint, and pampered by indulgence, to a degree seldom allowed to mortals, grew up into a spirit of despotism as stern and absolute as ever usurped the human heart. The love of power and supremacy absorbed, consumed him. No other passion, no domestic attachment, no private friendship, no love of pleasure, no relish for letters or the arts, no human sympathy, no human weakness, divided his mind with the passion for dominion and for dazzling manifestations of his power. Before this, duty, honor, love, humanity fell prostrate. Josephine, we are told, was dear to him; but the devoted wife, who had stood firm and faithful in the day of his doubtful fortunes, was cast off in his prosperity, to make room for a stranger, who might be more subservient to his power. He was affectionate, we are told, to his brothers and mother; but his brothers, the moment they ceased to be his tools, were disgraced; and his mother, it is said, was not allowed to sit in the presence of her imperial son.* He was sometimes softened, we are told, by the sight of the field of battle strown with the wounded and dead. But if the Moloch

* See 'America,' page 57. We should not give this very unamiable trait of Napoleon's domestic character, but on authority which we cannot question.

of his ambition claimed new heaps of slain to-morrow, it was never denied. With all his sensibility, he gave millions to the sword, with as little compunction as he would have brushed away so many insects, which had infested his march. To him, all human will, desire, power, were to bend. His superiority, none might question. He insulted the fallen, who had contracted the guilt of opposing his progress ; and not even woman's loveliness, and the dignity of a queen, could give shelter from his contumely. His allies were his vassals, nor was their vassalage concealed. Too lofty to use the arts of conciliation, preferring command to persuasion, overbearing, and all-grasping, he spread distrust, exasperation, fear, and revenge through Europe ; and when the day of retribution came, the old antipathies and mutual jealousies of nations were swallowed up in one burning purpose to prostrate the common tyrant, the universal foe.

Such was Napoleon Bonaparte. But some will say, he was still a great man. This we mean not to deny. But we would have it understood, that there are various kinds or orders of greatness, and that the highest did not belong to Bonaparte. There are different orders of greatness. Among these the first rank is unquestionably due to *moral* greatness, or magnanimity ; to that sublime energy, by which the soul, smitten with the love of virtue, binds itself indissolubly, for life and for death, to truth and duty ; espouses as its own the interests of human nature ; scorns all meanness and defies all peril ; bears in its own conscience a voice louder than threatenings and thunders ; withstands all the powers of the universe, which would sever it from the cause of freedom, and religion ; reposes an unfaltering trust in God in the darkest hour, and is ever 'ready to

be offered up' on the altar of its country or of mankind. Of this moral greatness, which throws all other forms of greatness into obscurity, we see not a trace in Napoleon. Though clothed with the power of a god, the thought of consecrating himself to the introduction of a new and higher era, to the exaltation of the character and condition of his race, seems never to have dawned on his mind. The spirit of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice seems not to have waged a moment's war with self-will and ambition. His ruling passions, indeed, were singularly at variance with magnanimity. Moral greatness has too much simplicity, is too unostentatious, too self-subsistent, and enters into others' interests with too much heartiness, to live an hour for what Napoleon always lived, to make itself the theme, and gaze, and wonder of a dazzled world.—Next to moral, comes *intellectual* greatness, or genius in the highest sense of that word ; and by this, we mean that sublime capacity of thought, through which the soul, smitten with the love of the true and the beautiful, essays to comprehend the universe, soars into the heavens, penetrates the earth, penetrates itself, questions the past, anticipates the future, traces out the general and all-comprehending laws of nature, binds together by innumerable affinities and relations all the objects of its knowledge, rises from the finite and transient to the infinite and the everlasting, frames to itself from its own fulness lovelier and sublimier forms than it beholds, discerns the harmonies between the world within and the world without us, and finds in every region of the universe types and interpreters of its own deep mysteries and glorious inspirations. This is the greatness which belongs to philosophers, and to the master spirits in poetry and the fine arts.—Next comes the greatness of

action; and by this we mean the sublime power of conceiving bold and extensive plans ; of constructing and bringing to bear on a mighty object a complicated machinery of means, energies, and arrangements, and of accomplishing great outward effects. To this head belongs the greatness of Bonaparte, and that he possessed it, we need not prove, and none will be hardy enough to deny. A man, who raised himself from obscurity to a throne, who changed the face of the world, who made himself felt through powerful and civilized nations, who sent the terror of his name across seas and oceans, whose will was pronounced and feared as destiny, whose donatives were crowns, whose antechamber was thronged by submissive princes, who broke down the awful barrier of the Alps and made them a highway, and whose fame was spread beyond the boundaries of civilisation to the steppes of the Cossack, and the deserts of the Arab ; a man, who has left this record of himself in history, has taken out of our hands the question, whether he shall be called great. All must concede to him a sublime power of action, an energy equal to great effects.

We are not disposed, however, to consider him as preeminent even in this order of greatness. War was his chief sphere. He gained his ascendancy in Europe by the sword. But war is not the field for the highest active talent, and Napoleon, we suspect, was conscious of this truth. The glory of being the greatest general of his age, would not have satisfied him. He would have scorned to take his place by the side of Marlborough or Turenne. It was as the founder of an empire, which threatened for a time to comprehend the world, and which demanded other talents besides that of war, that he challenged unrivalled fame. And here we question his claim. Here we cannot award him su-

premacy. The project of universal empire, however imposing, was not original. The revolutionary governments of France had adopted it before ; nor can we consider it as a sure indication of greatness, when we remember that the weak and vain mind of Louis XIV., was large enough to cherish it. The question is ; Did Napoleon bring to this design the capacity of advancing it by bold and original conceptions, adapted to an age of civilisation, and of singular intellectual and moral excitement ? Did he discover new foundations of power ? Did he frame new bonds of union for subjugated nations ? Did he discover, or originate, some common interests by which his empire might be held together ? Did he breathe a spirit which should supplant the old national attachments, or did he invent any substitutes for those vulgar instruments of force and corruption, which any and every usurper would have used ? Never in the records of time, did the world furnish such materials to work with, such means of modelling nations afresh, of building up a new power, of introducing a new era, as did Europe at the period of the French revolution. Never was the human mind so capable of new impulses. And did Napoleon prove himself equal to the condition of the world ? Do we detect one original conception in his means of universal empire ? Did he seize on the enthusiasm of his age, that powerful principle, more efficient than arms or policy, and bend it to his purpose ? What did he do but follow the beaten track ? but apply force and fraud in their very coarsest forms ? Napoleon showed a vulgar mind, when he assumed self-interest as the sole spring of human action. With the sword in one hand and bribes in the other, he imagined himself absolute master of the human mind. The strength of moral, national, and domestic feeling,

he could not comprehend. The finest, and after all, the most powerful elements in human nature, hardly entered into his conceptions of it ; and how then could he have established a durable power over the human race ? We want little more to show his want of originality and comprehensiveness as the founder of an empire, than the simple fact, that he chose as his chief counsellors Talleyrand and Fouché, names which speak for themselves. We may judge of the greatness of the master spirit, from the minds which he found most congenial with his own. In war, Bonaparte was great ; for he was bold, original, and creative. Beyond the camp he indeed showed talent, but not superior to that of other eminent men.

There have been two circumstances, which have done much to disarm or weaken the strong moral reprobation with which Bonaparte ought to have been regarded, and which we deem worthy of notice. We refer to the wrongs which he is supposed to have suffered at St. Helena, and to the unworthy use which the Allied Powers have made of their triumph over Napoleon. First, his supposed wrongs at St. Helena have excited a sympathy in his behalf, which has thrown a veil over his crimes. We are not disposed to deny, that an unwarrantable, because unnecessary, severity was exercised towards Bonaparte. We think it not very creditable to the British government, that it tortured a sensitive captive by refusing him a title which he had long worn. We think that not only religion and humanity, but self-respect forbids us to inflict a single useless pang on a fallen foe. But we should be weak indeed, if the moral judgments and feelings, with which Napoleon's career ought to be reviewed, should give

place to sympathy with the sufferings by which it was closed. With regard to the scruples, which not a few have expressed as to the right of banishing him to St. Helena, we can only say, that our consciences are not yet refined to such exquisite delicacy, as to be at all sensitive on this particular. We admire nothing more in Bonaparte, than the effrontery with which he claimed protection from the laws of nations. That a man, who had set these laws at open defiance, should fly to them for shelter; that the oppressor of the world should claim its sympathy as an oppressed man, and that his claim should find advocates; these things are to be set down among the extraordinary events of this extraordinary age. Truly, the human race is in a pitiable state. It may be trampled on, spoiled, loaded like a beast of burden, made the prey of rapacity, insolence, and the sword; but it must not touch a hair, or disturb the pillow of one of its oppressors, unless it can find chapter and verse in the code of national law, to authorise its rudeness towards the privileged offender. For ourselves, we should rejoice to see every tyrant, whether a usurper or hereditary prince, fastened to a lonely rock in the ocean. Whoever gives clear, undoubted proof, that he is prepared and sternly resolved to make the earth a slaughterhouse, and to crush every will adverse to his own, ought to be caged like a wild beast; and to require mankind to proceed against him according to written laws and precedents, as if he were a private citizen in a quiet court of justice, is just as rational as to require a man, in eminent peril from an assassin, to wait and prosecute his murderer according to the most protracted forms of law. There are great solemn rights of nature, which precede laws, and on which law is founded. There are great exigencies

in human affairs, which speak for themselves, and need no precedent to teach the right path. There are awful periods in the history of our race, which do not belong to its ordinary state, and which are not to be governed and judged by ordinary rules. Such a period was that, when Bonaparte, by infraction of solemn engagements, had thrown himself into France, and convulsed all Europe ; and they, who confound this with the ordinary events of history, and see in Bonaparte but an ordinary foe to the peace and independence of nations, have certainly very different intellects from our own.

We confess, too, that we are not only unable to see the wrong done to Napoleon in sending him to St. Helena, but that we cannot muster up much sympathy for the inconveniences and privations which he endured there. Our sympathies in this particular are wayward and untractable. When we would carry them to that solitary island, and fasten them on the illustrious victim of British cruelty, they will not tarry there, but take their flight across the Mediterranean to Jaffa, and across the Atlantic to the platform where the Duke d'Enghien was shot, to the prison of Toussaint, and to fields of battle where thousands at his bidding lay weltering in blood. When we strive to fix our thoughts upon the sufferings of the injured hero, other and more terrible sufferings, of which he was the cause, rush upon us ; and his complaints, however loud and angry, are drowned by groans and execrations, which fill our ears from every region which he traversed. We have no tears to spare for fallen greatness, when that greatness was founded in crime, and reared by force and perfidy. We reserve them for those on whose ruin it rose. We keep our sympathies for our race, for human nature in its humbler forms, for the impoverished peasant, the wid-

owed mother, the violated virgin ; and are even perverse enough to rejoice, that the ocean has a prison-house, where the author of those miseries may be safely lodged. Bonaparte's history is to us too solemn, the wrongs for which humanity and freedom arraign him, are too flagrant, to allow us to play the part of sentimentalists around his grave at St. Helena. We leave this to the more refined age in which we live ; and we do so in the hope that an age is coming of less tender mould, but of loftier, sterner feeling, and of deeper sympathy with the whole human race. Should our humble page then live, we trust with an undoubting faith, that the uncompromising indignation with which we plead the cause of our oppressed and insulted nature, will not be set down to the account of vindictiveness and hardness of heart.

We observed that the moral indignation of many towards Bonaparte had been impaired or turned away, not only by his supposed wrongs, but by the unworthy use which his conquerors made of their triumph. We are told, that bad as was his despotism, the Holy Alliance is a worse one ; and that Napoleon was less a scourge, than the present coalition of the continental monarchs, framed for the systematic suppression of freedom. By such reasoning, his crimes are cloaked, and his fall made a theme of lamentation. It is not one of the smallest errors and sins of the Allied Sovereigns, that they have contrived, by their base policy, to turn the resentments and moral displeasure of men from the usurper upon themselves. For these sovereigns we have no defence to offer. We yield to none in detestation of the Holy Alliance, profanely so called. To us its doctrines are as false and pestilent, as any broached by Jacobinism. The Allied Monarchs are ad-

ding to the other wrongs of despots, that of flagrant ingratitude ; of ingratitude to the generous and brave nations, to whom they owe their thrones, whose spirit of independence and patriotism, and whose hatred of the oppressor, contributed more than standing armies, to raise up the fallen, and to strengthen the falling monarchies of Europe. Be it never forgotten in the records of despotism, let history record it on her most durable tablet, that the first use made by the principal continental sovereigns of their regained or confirmed power, was, to conspire against the hopes and rights of the nations by whom they had been saved ; to combine the military power of Europe against free institutions, against the press, against the spirit of liberty and patriotism which had sprung up in the glorious struggle with Napoleon, against the right of the people to exert an influence on the governments by which their dearest interests were to be controlled. Never be it forgotten, that such was the honor of sovereigns, such their requital for the blood which had been shed freely in their defence. Freedom and humanity send up a solemn, and prevailing cry against them, to that tribunal, where kings and subjects are soon to stand as equals.

But still we should be strangely blind, if we were not to feel that the fall of Napoleon was a blessing to the world. Who can look, for example, at France, and not see there a degree of freedom which could never have grown up under the terrible frown of the usurper ? True, Bonaparte's life, though it seemed a charmed one, must at length have ended ; and we are told that then his empire would have been broken, and that the general crash, by some inexplicable process, would have given birth to a more extensive and durable liberty than can now be hoped. But such anticipations seem to us

to be built on a strange inattention to the nature and inevitable consequences of Napoleon's power. It was wholly a military power. He was literally turning Europe into a camp, and drawing its best talent into one occupation, war. Thus Europe was retracing its steps to those ages of calamity and darkness, when the only law was the sword. The progress of centuries, which had consisted chiefly in the substitution of intelligence, public opinion, and other mild and rational influences, for brutal force, was to be reversed. At Bonaparte's death, his empire must, indeed, have been dissolved; but military chiefs, like Alexander's lieutenants, would have divided it. The sword alone would have shaped its future communities; and after years of desolation and bloodshed, Europe would have found, not repose, but a respite, an armed truce, under warriors, whose only title to empire would have been their own good blades, and the weight of whose thrones would have been upheld by military force alone. Amidst such convulsions, during which the press would have been everywhere fettered, and the military spirit would have triumphed over and swallowed up the spirit and glory of letters and liberal arts, we greatly fear, that the human intellect would have lost its present impulse, its thirst for progress, and would have fallen back towards barbarism. Let not the friends of freedom bring dishonor on themselves or desert their cause, by instituting comparisons between Napoleon and legitimate sovereigns, which may be construed into eulogies on the former. For ourselves, we have no sympathy with tyranny, whether it bear the name of usurpation or legitimacy. We are not pleading the cause of the Allied Sovereigns. In our judgment, they have contracted the very guilt against which they have pretended to combine. In our

apprehension, a conspiracy against the rights of the human race, is as foul a crime as rebellion against the rights of sovereigns ; nor is there less of treason in warring against public freedom, than in assailing royal power. Still we are bound in truth to confess, that the Allied Sovereigns are not to be ranked with Bonaparte, whose design against the independence of nations and the liberties of the world, in this age of civilisation, liberal thinking, and christian knowledge, is in our estimation the most nefarious enterprise recorded in history.

The series of events, which it has been our province to review, offers subjects of profound thought and solemn instruction to the moralist and politician. We have retraced it with many painful feelings. It shows us a great people, who had caught some indistinct glimpses of freedom, and of a nobler and a happier political constitution, betrayed by their leaders, and brought back, by a military despot, to heavier chains than they had broken. We see with indignation one man, a man like ourselves, subjecting whole nations to his absolute rule. It is this wrong and insult to our race which has chiefly moved us. Had a storm of God's ordination, passed over Europe, prostrating its capitals, sweeping off its villages, burying millions in ruins, we should have wept, we should have trembled. But in this there would have been only wretchedness. Now we also see debasement. To us there is something radically, and increasingly shocking, in the thought of one man's will becoming a law to his race ; in the thought of multitudes, of vast communities, surrendering conscience, intellect, their affections, their rights, their interests to the stern mandate of a fellow creature. When we see one word of a frail man on the throne of France, tearing a hundred

thousand sons from their homes, breaking asunder the sacred ties of domestic life, sentencing myriads of the young to make murder their calling and rapacity their means of support, and extorting from nations their treasures to extend this ruinous sway, we are ready to ask ourselves, Is not this a dream? And when the sad reality comes home to us, we blush for a race which can stoop to such an abject lot. At length, indeed, we see the tyrant humbled, stripped of power; but stripped by those who, in the main, are not unwilling to play the despot on a narrower scale, and to break down the spirit of nations under the same iron sway.

How is it, that tyranny has thus triumphed? that the hopes with which we greeted the French revolution have been crushed? that a usurper plucked up the last roots of the tree of liberty, and planted despotism in its place? The chief cause is not far to seek, nor can it be too often urged on the friends of freedom. France failed through the want of that moral preparation for liberty, without which the blessing cannot be secured. She was not ripe for the good she sought. She was too corrupt for freedom. France had indeed to contend with great political ignorance; but had not ignorance been reenforced by deep moral defect, she might have won her way to free institutions. Her character forbade her to be free; and it now seems strange that we could ever have expected her to secure this boon. How could we believe, that a liberty, of which that heartless scoffer, Voltaire, was a chief apostle, could have triumphed? Most of the preachers of French liberty had thrown off all the convictions which enoble the mind. Man's connexion with God they broke, for they declared that there was no God in whom to trust in the great struggle for liberty. Human immortality,

that truth which is the seed of all greatness, they derided. To their philosophy, man was a creature of chance, a compound of matter, an ephemeron, a worm who was soon to rot and perish forever. What insanity was it to expect, that such men were to work out the emancipation of their race! that in such hands the hopes and dearest rights of humanity were secure! Liberty was tainted by their touch, polluted by their breath, and yet we trusted that it was to rise in health and glory from their embrace. We looked to men, who openly founded morality on private interest, for the sacrifices, the devotion, the heroic virtue, which Freedom always demands from her assertors.

The great cause of the discomfiture of the late European struggle for liberty, is easily understood by an American, who recurs to the history of his own revolution. This issued prosperously, because it was begun and was conducted under the auspices of private and public virtue. Our liberty did not come to us by accident, nor was it the gift of a few leaders; but its seeds were sown plentifully in the minds of the whole people. It was rooted in the conscience and reason of the nation. It was the growth of deliberate convictions and generous principles liberally diffused. We had no Paris, no metropolis, which a few leaders swayed, and which sent forth its influences, like 'a mighty heart,' through dependent and subservient provinces. The country was all heart. The living principle pervaded the community, and every village added strength to the solemn purpose of being free. We have here an explanation of a striking fact in the history of our revolution; we mean the want or absence of that description of great men, whom we meet in other countries; men, who, by their distinct and single agency, and by their splendid

deeds, determine a nation's fate. There was too much greatness in the American people, to admit this overshadowing greatness of leaders. Accordingly the United States had no liberator, no political saviour. Washington indeed conferred on us great blessings. But Washington was not a hero, in the common sense of that word. We never spoke of him as the French did of Bonaparte, never talked of his eagle-eyed, irresistible genius, as if this were to work out our safety. We never lost our self-respect. We felt that, under God, we were to be free through our own courage, energy, and wisdom, under the animating and guiding influences of this great and good mind. Washington served us chiefly by his sublime moral qualities.—To him belonged the proud distinction of being the leader in a revolution, without awakening one doubt or solicitude as to the spotless purity of his purpose. His was the glory of being the brightest manifestation of the spirit which reigned in his country ; and in this way he became a source of energy, a bond of union, the centre of an enlightened people's confidence. In such a revolution as that of France, Washington would have been nothing ; for that sympathy, which subsisted between him and his fellow citizens, and which was the secret of his power, would have been wanting. By an instinct which is unerring, we call Washington, with grateful reverence, the Father of his country, but not its Saviour. A people, which wants a saviour, which does not possess an earnest and pledge of freedom in its own heart, is not yet ready to be free.

A great question here offers itself, at which we can only glance. If a moral preparation is required for freedom, how, it is asked, can Europe ever be free ? How, under the despotisms which now crush the conti-

ment, can nations grow ripe for liberty? Is it to be hoped, that men will learn, in the school of slavery, the spirit and virtues, which, we are told, can alone work out their deliverance? In the absolute governments of Europe, the very instruments of forming an enlightened and generous love of freedom, are bent into the service of tyranny. The press is an echo of the servile doctrines of the court. The schools and seminaries of education are employed to taint the young mind with the maxims of despotism. Even Christianity is turned into a preacher of legitimacy, and its temples are desecrated by the abject teaching of unconditional submission. How then is the spirit of a wise and moral freedom to be generated and diffused? We have stated the difficulty in its full force; for nothing is gained by winking out of sight the tremendous obstacles, with which liberal principles and institutions must contend. We have not time at present to answer the great question now proposed. We will only say, that we do not despair; and we will briefly suggest what seems to us the chief expedient, by which the cause of freedom, obstructed as it is, must now be advanced. In despotic countries, those men whom God has inspired with lofty sentiments and a thirst for freedom, (and such are spread through all Europe,) must, in their individual capacity, communicate themselves to individual minds. The cause of liberty on the continent cannot now be forwarded by the action of men in masses. But in every country there are those who feel their degradation and their wrongs, who abhor tyranny as the chief obstruction of the progress of nations, and who are willing and prepared to suffer for liberty. Let such men spread around them their own spirit, by every channel which a jealous despotism has not closed. Let them give ut-

terance to sentiments of magnanimity in private conference, and still more by the press ; for there are modes of clothing and expressing kindling truths, which, it is presumed, no censorship would dare to proscribe. Let them especially teach that great truth, which is the seminal principle of a virtuous freedom, and the very foundation of morals and religion ; we mean, the doctrine, that conscience, the voice of God in every heart, is to be listened to above all other guides and lords ; that there is a sovereign within us, clothed with more awful powers and rights than any outward king ; and that he alone is worthy the name of a man, who gives himself up solemnly, deliberately, to obey this internal guide through peril and in death. This is the spirit of freedom ; for no man is wholly and immutably free but he who has broken every outward yoke, that he may obey his own deliberate conscience. This is the lesson to be taught alike in republics and despoticisms. As yet it has but dawned on the world. Its full application remains to be developed. They who have been baptized, by a true experience, into this vital and all-comprehending truth, must everywhere be its propagators ; and he who makes one convert of it near a despot's throne, has broken one link of that despot's chain. It is chiefly in the diffusion of this loftiness of moral sentiment, that we place our hope of freedom ; and we have a hope, because we know that there are those who have drunk into this truth, and are ready, when God calls, to be its martyrs. We do not despair, for there is a contagion, we would rather say, a divine power, in sublime moral principle. This is our chief trust. We have less and less hope from force and bloodshed, as the instruments of working out man's redemption from slavery. History shows us not a few princes, who have gained or strength-

ened thrones by assassination or war. But freedom, which is another name for justice, honor, and benevolence, scorns to use the private dagger, and wields with trembling the public sword. The true conspiracy before which tyranny is to fall, is that of virtuous, elevated minds, which shall consecrate themselves to the work of awakening in men a consciousness of the rights, powers, purposes, and greatness of human nature ; which shall oppose to force, the heroism of intellect and conscience, and the spirit of self-sacrifice. We believe that, at this moment, there are virtue and wisdom enough to shake despotic thrones, were they as confiding as they should be, in God and in their own might, and were they to pour themselves through every channel into the public mind.

We close our present labors, with commending to the protection of Almighty God the cause of human freedom and improvement. We adore the wisdom and goodness of his providence, which has ordained, that liberty shall be wrought out by the magnanimity, courage, and sacrifices of men. We bless him for the glorious efforts which this cause has already called forth ; for the intrepid defenders who have gathered round it, and whose fame is a most precious legacy of past ages ; for the toils and sufferings by which it has been upheld ; for the awakening and thrilling voice which comes to us from the dungeon and scaffold, where the martyrs of liberty have pined or bled. We bless him, that even tyranny has been overruled for good, by exciting a resistance, which has revealed to us the strength of virtuous principle in the human soul. We beseech this Great and Good Parent, from whom all pure influences proceed, to enkindle, by his quickening breath, an unquenchable love of virtue and freedom in those favored men, whom

he hath enriched and signalized by eminent gifts and powers, that they may fulfil the high function of inspiring their fellow beings with a consciousness of the birth-right and destination of human nature. Wearyed with violence and blood, we beseech him to subvert oppressive governments, by the gentle, yet awful, power of truth and virtue; by the teachings of uncorrupted Christianity; by the sovereignty of enlightened opinion; by the triumph of sentiments of magnanimity; by mild, rational, and purifying influences, which will raise the spirit of the enslaved, and which sovereigns will be unable to withstand. For this peaceful revolution we earnestly pray. If, however, after long, forbearing, and unavailing applications to justice and humanity, the friends of freedom should be summoned, by the voice of God within, and by his providence abroad, to vindicate their rights with other arms, to do a sterner work, to repel despotic force by force, may they not forget, even in this hour of provocation, the spirit which their high calling demands. Let them take the sword with awe, as those on whom a holy function is devolved. Let them regard themselves as ministers and delegates of Him, whose dearest attribute is Mercy. Let them not stain their sacred cause by one cruel deed, by the infliction of one needless pang, by shedding without cause one drop of human blood.



NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

PART II.

IN a former number of our work,* we reviewed the life and character of Napoleon Bonaparte. We resume the subject, not for the purpose of speaking more largely of the individual, but that we may consider more distinctly the *principle of action* which governed him, and of which he was a remarkable manifestation.

Power was the idol to which Bonaparte sacrificed himself. To gain supremacy and unlimited sway, to subject men to his will, was his chief, settled, unrelenting purpose. This passion drew and converted into itself the whole energy of his nature. The love of power, that common principle, explains, in a great degree, his character and life. His crimes did not spring from any impulse peculiar to himself. With all his contempt of the human race, he still belonged to it. It is true both of the brightest virtues and the blackest vices, though they seem to set apart their possessors from the rest of mankind, that the seeds of them are sown in every human breast. The man, who attracts and awes us by his intellectual and moral grandeur, is only an ex-

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ample and anticipation of the improvements, for which every mind was endowed with reason and conscience ; and the worst man has become such by the perversion and excess of desires and appetites which he shares with his whole race. Napoleon had no element of character which others do not possess. It was his misery and guilt that he was usurped and absorbed by one passion ; that his whole mind shot up into one growth ; that his singular strength of thought and will, which, if consecrated to virtue, would have enrolled him among the benefactors of mankind, was enslaved by one lust. He is not to be gazed on as a miracle. He was a manifestation of our own nature. He teaches on a large scale what thousands teach on a narrow one. He shows us the greatness of the ruin which is wrought, when the order of the mind is subverted, conscience dethroned, and a strong passion left without restraint to turn every inward and outward resource to the accomplishment of a selfish purpose.

The influence of the *love of power* on human affairs is so constant, unbounded, and tremendous, that we think this principle of our nature worthy of distinct consideration, and shall devote to it a few pages, as a fit sequel to our notice of Bonaparte.

The passion for power is one of the most universal ; nor is it to be regarded as a crime in all its forms. Sweeping censures on a natural sentiment cast blame on the Creator. This principle shows itself in the very dawn of our existence. The child never exults and rejoices more, than when it becomes conscious of power by overcoming difficulties, or compassing new ends. All our desires and appetites lend aid and energy to this passion, for all find increase of gratification, in proportion to

the growth of our strength and influence. We ought to add, that this principle is fed from nobler sources. Power is a chief element of all the commanding qualities of our nature. It enters into all the higher virtues; such as magnanimity, fortitude, constancy. It enters into intellectual eminence. It is power of thought and utterance which immortalizes the products of genius. Is it strange that an attribute, through which all our passions reach their objects, and which characterizes whatever is great or admirable in man, should awaken intense desire, and be sought as one of the chief goods of life?

This principle, we have said, is not in all its forms a crime. There are indeed various kinds of power, which it is our duty to covet, accumulate, and hold fast. First, there is *inward* power, the most precious of all possessions ; power over ourselves ; power to withstand trial, to bear suffering, to front danger ; power over pleasure and pain ; power to follow our convictions, however resisted by menace or scorn ; the power of calm reliance in seasons of darkness and storms. Again, there is a power over *outward* things ; the power by which the mind triumphs over matter, presses into its service the subtlest and strongest elements, makes the winds, fire, and steam its ministers, rears the city, opens a path through the ocean, and makes the wilderness blossom as the rose. These forms of power, especially the first, are glorious distinctions of our race, nor can we prize them too highly.

There is another power, which is our principal concern in the present discussion. We mean power over our fellow creatures. It is this which ambition chiefly covets, and which has instigated to more crime, and spread more misery than any other cause. We are not

however to condemn even this universally. There is a truly noble sway of man over man ; one, which it is our honor to seek and exert ; which is earned by well doing ; which is a chief recompense of virtue. We refer to the quickening influence of a good and great mind over other minds, by which it brings them into sympathy with itself. Far from condemning this, we are anxious to hold it forth as the purest glory which virtuous ambition can propose. The power of awakening, enlightening, elevating our fellow creatures, may, with peculiar fitness, be called divine ; for there is no agency of God so beneficent and sublime as that which he exerts on rational natures, and by which he assimilates them to himself. This sway over other souls is the surest test of greatness. We admire, indeed, the energy which subdues the material creation, or develops the physical resources of a state. But it is a nobler might which calls forth the intellectual and moral resources of a people, which communicates new impulses to society, throws into circulation new and stirring thoughts, gives the mind a new consciousness of its faculties, and rouses and fortifies the will to an unconquerable purpose of well doing. This spiritual power is worth all other. To improve man's outward condition is a secondary agency, and is chiefly important as it gives the means of inward growth. The most glorious minister of God on earth, is he who speaks with a life-giving energy to other minds, breathing into them the love of truth and virtue, strengthening them to suffer in a good cause, and lifting them above the senses and the world.

We know not a more exhilarating thought, than that this power is given to men ; that we can not only change the face of the outward world, and by virtuous discipline improve ourselves, but that we may become

springs of life and light to our fellow beings. We are thus admitted to a fellowship with Jesus Christ, whose highest end was, that he might act with a new and celestial energy on the human mind. We rejoice to think, that he did not come to monopolize this divine sway, to enjoy a solitary grandeur, but to receive others, even all who should obey his religion, into the partnership of this honor and happiness. Every Christian, in proportion to his progress, acquires a measure of this divine agency. In the humblest conditions, a power goes forth from a devout and disinterested spirit, calling forth silently moral and religious sentiment, perhaps in a child, or some other friend, and teaching, without the aid of words, the loveliness and peace of sincere and single-hearted virtue. In the more enlightened classes, individuals now and then rise up, who, through a singular force and elevation of soul, obtain a sway over men's minds to which no limit can be prescribed. They speak with a voice which is heard by distant nations, and which goes down to future ages. Their names are repeated with veneration by millions; and millions read in their lives and writings a quickening testimony to the greatness of the mind, to its moral strength, to the reality of disinterested virtue. These are the true sovereigns of the earth. They share in the royalty of Jesus Christ. They have a greatness which will be more and more felt. The time is coming, its signs are visible, when this long mistaken attribute of greatness, will be seen to belong eminently, if not exclusively, to those, who, by their characters, deeds, sufferings, writings, leave imperishable and ennobling traces of themselves on the human mind. Among these legitimate sovereigns of the world, will be ranked the philosopher, who pen-

trates the secrets of the universe, and of the soul; who opens new fields to the intellect; who gives it a new consciousness of its own powers, rights, and divine original; who spreads enlarged and liberal habits of thought; and who helps men to understand, that an ever growing knowledge is the patrimony destined for them by the ‘Father of their Spirits.’ Among them will be ranked the statesman, who, escaping a vulgar policy, rises to the discovery of the true interest of a state; who seeks without fear or favor the common good; who understands that a nation’s mind is more valuable than its soil; who inspirits a people’s enterprise, without making them the slaves of wealth; who is mainly anxious to originate or give stability to institutions by which society may be carried forward; who confides with a sublime constancy in justice and virtue, as the only foundation of a wise policy and of public prosperity; and above all, who has so drunk into the spirit of Christ and of God, as never to forget, that his particular country is a member of the great human family, bound to all nations, by a common nature, by a common interest, and by indissoluble laws of equity and charity. Among these will be ranked, perhaps on the highest throne, the moral and religious Reformer, who truly merits that name; who rises above his times; who is moved by a holy impulse to assail vicious establishments, sustained by fierce passions and inveterate prejudices; who rescues great truths from the corruptions of ages; who, joining calm and deep thought to profound feeling, secures to religion at once enlightened and earnest conviction; who unfolds to men higher forms of virtue than they have yet attained or conceived; who gives brighter and more thrilling views of the per-

fection for which they were framed, and inspires a victorious faith in the perpetual progress of our nature.

There is one characteristic of this power which belongs to truly great minds, particularly deserving notice. Far from enslaving, it makes more and more free, those on whom it is exercised ; and in this respect it differs wholly from the vulgar sway which ambition thirsts for. It awakens a kindred power in others, calls their faculties into new life, and particularly strengthens them to follow their own deliberate convictions of truth and duty. It breathes conscious energy, self-respect, moral independence, and a scorn of every foreign yoke.

There is another power over men, very different from this ; a power, not to quicken and elevate, but to crush and subdue ; a power which robs men of the free use of their nature, takes them out of their own hands, and compels them to bend to another's will. This is the sway which men grasp at most eagerly, and which it is our great purpose to expose. To reign, to give laws, to clothe their own wills with omnipotence, to annihilate all other wills, to spoil the individual of that self-direction which is his most precious right—this has ever been deemed by multitudes the highest prize for competition and conflict. The most envied men are those, who have succeeded in prostrating multitudes, in subjecting whole communities, to their single will. It is the love of this power, in all its forms, which we are anxious to hold up to reprobation. If any crime should be placed by society beyond pardon, it is this.

This power has been exerted most conspicuously and perniciously by two classes of men ; the priest or minister of religion, and the civil ruler. Both rely on the same instrument ; that is, pain or terror ; the first calling to his aid the fires and torments of the future world,

and practising on the natural dread of invisible powers; and the latter availing himself of chains, dungeons, and gibbets in the present life. Through these terrible applications, man has in all ages and in almost every country, been made, in a greater or less degree, a slave and machine; been shackled in all his faculties, and degraded into a tool of others' wills and passions. The influence of almost every political and religious institution has been to make man abject in mind, fearful, servile, a mechanical repeater of opinions which he dares not try, and a contributor of his toil, sweat, and blood, to governments which never dreamed of the general weal as their only legitimate end. On the immense majority of men, thus wronged and enslaved, the consciousness of their own nature has not yet dawned; and the doctrine, that each has a mind, worth more than the material world, and framed to grow forever by a self-forming, self-directing energy, is still a secret, a mystery, notwithstanding the clear annunciation of it, ages ago, by Jesus Christ. We know not a stronger proof of the intenseness and nefariousness of the love of power, than the fact of its having virtually abrogated Christianity, and even turned into an engine of dominion, a revelation which breathes throughout the spirit of freedom, proclaims the essential equality of the human race, and directs its most solemn denunciations against the passion for rule and empire.

That this power, which consists in force and compulsion, in the imposition on the many of the will and judgment of one or a few, is of a low order, when compared with the quickening influence over others, of which we have before spoken, we need not stop to prove. But the remark is less obvious, though not less true, that it is not only inferior in kind, but in amount

or degree. This may not be so easily acknowledged. He, whose will is passively obeyed by a nation, or whose creed implicitly adopted by a spreading sect, may not easily believe, that his power is exceeded, not only in kind or quality, but in extent, by him who wields only the silent, subtle influence of moral and intellectual gifts. But the superiority of moral to arbitrary sway in this particular, is proved by its effects. Moral power is creative ; arbitrary power wastes away the spirit and force of those on whom it is exerted. And is it not a mightier work to create than to destroy ? A higher energy is required to quicken than to crush ; to elevate than to depress ; to warm and expand than to chill and contract. Any hand, even the weakest, may take away life ; another agency is required to kindle or restore it. A vulgar incendiary may destroy in an hour a magnificent structure, the labor of ages. Has he energy to be compared with the creative intellect, in which this work had its origin ? A fanatic of ordinary talent may send terror through a crowd ; and by the craft, which is so often joined with fanaticism, may fasten on multitudes a debasing creed. Has he power to be compared with him, who rescues from darkness one only of these enslaved minds, and quickens it to think justly and nobly in relation to God, duty, and immortality ? The energies of a single soul, awakened, by such an influence, to the free and full use of its powers, may surpass, in their progress, the intellectual activity of a whole community, enchained and debased by fanaticism or outward force. Arbitrary power, whether civil or religious, if tried by the only fair test, that is, by its effects, seems to have more affinity with weakness than strength. It enfeebles and narrows what it acts upon. Its efficiency resembles that of

darkness and cold in the natural world. True power is vivifying, productive, builds up, and gives strength. We have a noble type and manifestation of it in the sun, which calls forth and diffuses motion, life, energy, and beauty. He who succeeds in chaining men's understandings and breaking their wills, may indeed number millions as his subjects. But a weak, puny race are the products of his sway, and they can only reach the stature and force of men by throwing off his yoke. He who, by an intellectual and moral energy, awakens kindred energy in others, touches springs of infinite might, gives impulse to faculties to which no bounds can be prescribed, begins an action which will never end. One great and kindling thought from a retired and obscure man, may live when thrones are fallen, and the memory of those who filled them obliterated, and like an undying fire, may illuminate and quicken all future generations.

We have spoken of the inferiority and worthlessness of that dominion over others, which has been coveted so greedily in all ages. We should rejoice could we convey some just idea of its moral turpitude. Of all injuries and crimes, the most flagrant is chargeable on him, who aims to establish dominion over his brethren. He wars with what is more precious than life. He would rob men of their chief prerogative and glory; we mean of self-dominion, of that empire which is given to a rational and moral being over his own soul and his own life. Such a being is framed to find honor and happiness in forming and swaying himself, in adopting as his supreme standard his convictions of truth and duty, in unfolding his powers by free exertion, in acting from a principle within, from his growing conscience. His proper and noblest attributes are self-government,

self-reverence, energy of thought, energy in choosing the right and the good, energy in casting off all other dominion. He was created for empire in his own breast, and wo, wo to them who would pluck from him this sceptre! A mind, inspired by God with reason and conscience, and capable, through these endowments, of progress in truth and duty, is a sacred thing ; more sacred than temples made with hands, or even than this outward universe. It is of nobler lineage than that of which human aristocracy makes its boast. It bears the lineaments of a Divine Parent. It has not only a physical, but moral connexion with the Supreme Being. Through its self-determining power, it is accountable for its deeds, and for whatever it becomes. Responsibility, that which above all things makes existence solemn, is laid upon it. Its great end is to conform itself, by its own energy, and by spiritual succours which its own prayers and faithfulness secure, to that perfection of wisdom and goodness, of which God is the original and source, which shines upon us from the whole outward world, but of which the intelligent soul is a truer recipient and a brighter image, even than the sun with all his splendors. From these views we learn, that no outrage, no injury, can equal that, which is perpetrated by him, who would break down and subjugate the human mind ; who would rob men of self-reverence ; who would bring them to stand more in awe of outward authority, than of reason and conscience in their own souls ; who would make himself a standard and law for his race, and shape, by force or terror, the free spirits of others after his own judgment and will.

All excellence, whether intellectual or moral, involves, as its essential elements, freedom, energy, and moral independence, so that the invader of these, wheth-

er from the throne or the pulpit, invades the most sacred interest of the human race. Intellectual excellence implies and requires these. This does not consist in passive assent even to the highest truths; or in the most extensive stores of knowledge acquired by an implicit faith, and lodged in the inert memory. It lies in force, freshness, and independence of thought; and is most conspicuously manifested by him, who, loving truth supremely, seeks it resolutely, follows the light without fear, and modifies the views of others by the patient, strenuous exercise of his own faculties. To a man thus intellectually free, truth is not what it is to passive multitudes, a foreign substance, dormant, lifeless, fruitless, but penetrating, prolific, full of vitality, and ministering to the health and expansion of the soul. And what we have said of intellectual excellence is still more true of moral. This has its foundation and root in freedom, and cannot exist a moment without it. The very idea of virtue is, that it is a free act, the product or result of the mind's self-determining power. It is not good feeling, infused by nature or caught by sympathy; nor is it good conduct into which we have slid-den through imitation, or which has been forced upon us by another's will. We ourselves are its authors in a high and peculiar sense. We indeed depend on God for virtue; for our capacity of moral action is wholly his gift and inspiration, and without his perpetual aid this capac-ty would avail nothing. But his aid is not compulsion. He respects, he cannot violate, that moral freedom which is his richest gift. To the individual, the de-cision of his own character is left. He has more than kingly power in his own soul. Let him never resign it. Let none dare to interfere with it. Virtue is self-dominion, or, what is the same thing, it is self-subjection

to the principle of duty, that highest law in the soul. If these views of intellectual and moral excellence be just, then to invade men's freedom is to aim the deadliest blow at their honor and happiness ; and their worst foe is he who fetters their reason, who makes his will their law, who makes them tools, echoes, copies of himself.

Perhaps it may be objected to the representation of virtue as consisting in self-dominion, that the scriptures speak of it as consisting in obedience to God. But these are perfectly compatible and harmonious views ; for genuine obedience to God is the free choice and adoption of a law, the great principles of which our own minds approve, and our own consciences bind on us ; which is not an arbitrary injunction, but an emanation and expression of the Divine Mind ; and which is intended throughout to give energy, dignity, and enlargement to our best powers. He, and he only, obeys God virtuously and acceptably, who reverences right, not power ; who has chosen rectitude as his supreme rule ; who sees and reveres in God the fulness and brightness of moral excellence, and who sees in obedience the progress and perfection of his own nature. That subjection to the Deity, which, we fear, is too common, in which the mind surrenders itself to mere power and will, is anything but virtue. We fear that it is disloyalty to that moral principle, which is ever to be reverenced as God's vicegerent in the rational soul.

Perhaps some may fear, that, in our zeal for the freedom and independence of the individual mind, we unsettle government, and almost imply that it is a wrong. Far from it. We hold government to be an essential means of our intellectual and moral education, and

would strengthen it by pointing out its legitimate functions. Government, as far as it is rightful, is the guardian and friend of freedom, so that in exalting the one we enforce the other. The highest aim of all authority is to confer liberty. This is true of domestic rule. The great, we may say the single object of parental government, of a wise and virtuous education, is, to give the child the fullest use of his own powers; to give him inward force; to train him up to govern himself. The same is true of the authority of Jesus Christ. He came, indeed, to rule mankind; but to rule them, not by arbitrary statutes, not by force and menace, not by mere will, but by setting before them, in precept and life, those everlasting rules of rectitude, which Heaven obeys, and of which every soul contains the living germs. He came to exert a moral power; to reign by the manifestation of celestial virtues; to awaken the energy of holy purpose in the free mind. He came to publish liberty to the captives; to open the prison door; to break the power of the passions; to break the yoke of a ceremonial religion which had been imposed in the childhood of the race; to exalt us to a manly homage and obedience of our Creator. Of civil government, too, the great end is to secure freedom. Its proper, and highest function is, to watch over the liberties of each and all, and to open to a community the widest field for all its powers. Its very chains and prisons have the general freedom for their aim. They are just, only when used to curb oppression and wrong; to disarm him who has a tyrant's heart, if not a tyrant's power, who wars against others' rights, who, by invading property or life, would substitute force for the reign of equal laws. Freedom, we repeat it, is the end of government. To exalt men to self-rule is the end

of all other rule, and he who would fasten on them his arbitrary will is their worst foe.

We have aimed to show the guilt of the love of power and dominion, by showing the ruin which it brings on the mind, by enlarging on the preciousness of that inward freedom which it invades and destroys. To us, this view is the most impressive ; but the guilt of this passion may also be discerned, and by some more clearly, in its outward influences ; in the desolation, bloodshed, and wo, of which it is the perpetual cause. We owe to it almost all the miseries of war. To spread the sway of one or a few, thousands and millions have been turned into machines under the name of soldiers, armed with instruments of destruction, and then sent to reduce others to their own lot by fear and pain, by fire and sword, by butchery and pillage. And is it light guilt, to array man against his brother ; to make murder the trade of thousands ; to drench the earth with human blood ; to turn it into a desert ; to scatter families like chaff ; to make mothers widows, and children orphans ; and to do all this for the purpose of spreading a still gloomier desolation, for the purpose of subjugating men's souls, turning them into base parasites, extorting from them a degrading homage, humbling them in their own eyes, and breaking them to servility as the chief duty of life ? When the passion for power succeeds, as it generally has done, in establishing despotism, it seems to make even civilisation a doubtful good. Whilst the monarch and his court are abandoned to a wasteful luxury, the peasantry, rooted to the soil and doomed to a perpetual round of labors, are raised but little above the brute. There are parts of Europe, christian Europe, in which the peasant, through whose sweat kings and nobles riot in plenty,

seems to enjoy less, on the whole, than the untamed Indian of our forests. Chained to one spot, living on the cheapest vegetables, sometimes unable to buy salt to season his coarse fare, seldom or never tasting animal food, having for his shelter a mud-walled hut floor'd with earth or stone, and subjected equally with the brute to the rule of a superior, he seems to us to partake less of animal, intellectual, and moral pleasures, than the free wanderer of the woods, whose steps no man fetters ; whose wigwam no tyrant violates ; whose chief toil is hunting, that noblest of sports ; who feasts on the deer, that most luxurious of viands ; to whom streams, as well as woods, pay tribute ; whose adventurous life gives sagacity ; and in whom peril nourishes courage and self-command. We are no advocates for savage life. We know that its boasted freedom is a delusion. The single fact that human nature in this wild state makes no progress, is proof enough that it wants true liberty. We mean only to say that man in the hands of despotism, is sometimes degraded below the savage ; that it were better for him to be lawless, than to live under lawless sway.

It is the part of Christians to look on the passion for power and dominion with strong abhorrence ; for it is singularly hostile to the genius of their religion. Jesus Christ always condemned it. One of the striking marks of his moral greatness, and of the originality of his character, was, that he held no fellowship and made no compromise with this universal spirit of his age, but withstood it in every form. He found the Jews intoxicating themselves with dreams of empire. Of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, the most familiar and dear to them, were those which announced him as a conqueror, and which were construed by their world-

liness into a promise of triumphs to the people from whom he was to spring. Even the chosen disciples of Jesus looked to him for this good. ‘To sit on his right hand and on his left,’ or, in other words, to hold the most commanding stations in his kingdom, was not only their lurking wish, but their open and importunate request. But there was no passion on which Jesus frowned more severely than on this. He taught, that to be great in his kingdom, men must serve, instead of ruling, their brethren. He placed among them a child as an emblem of the humility of his religion. His most terrible rebukes fell on the lordly, aspiring Pharisee. In his own person, he was mild and condescending, exacting no personal service, living with his disciples as a friend, sharing their wants, sleeping in their fishing boat, and even washing their feet; and in all this, he expressly proposed himself to them as a pattern, knowing well, that the last triumph of disinterestedness is to forget our own superiority, in our sympathy, solicitude, tenderness, respect, and self-denying zeal for those who are below us. We cannot indeed wonder that the lust of power should be encountered by the sternest rebukes and menace of Christianity, because it wages open war with the great end of this religion, which is the elevation of the human mind. No corruption of this religion is more palpable and more enormous, than that which turns it into an instrument of dominion, and which makes it teach, that man’s primary duty is to give himself a passive material into the hands of his minister, priest, or king.

The subject which we now discuss is one in which all nations have an interest, and especially our own; and we should fail of our main purpose, were we not to lead our readers to apply it to ourselves. The passion

for ruling, though most completely developed in despotisms, is confined to no forms of government. It is the chief peril of free states, the natural enemy of free institutions. It agitates our own country, and still throws an uncertainty over the great experiment we are making here in behalf of liberty. We will try then, in a few words, to expose its influences and dangers, and to abate that zeal with which a participation in office and power is sought among ourselves.

It is the distinction of republican institutions, that whilst they compel the passion for power to moderate its pretensions, and to satisfy itself with more limited gratifications, they tend to spread it more widely through the community, and to make it a universal principle. The doors of office being opened to all, crowds burn to rush in. A thousand hands are stretched out to grasp the reins which are denied to none. Perhaps in this boasted and boasting land of liberty, not a few, if called to state the chief good of a republic, would place it in this; that every man is eligible to every office, and that the highest places of power and trust are prizes for universal competition. The superiority attributed by many to our institutions, is, not that they secure the greatest freedom, but give every man a chance of ruling; not that they reduce the power of government within the narrowest limits which the safety of the state admits, but throw it into as many hands as possible. The despot's great crime is thought to be, that he keeps the delight of dominion to himself, that he makes a monopoly of it, whilst our more generous institutions, by breaking it into parcels, and inviting the multitude to scramble for it, spread this joy more widely. The result is, that political ambition infects our country, and generates a feverish restlessness and dis-

content, which, to the monarchist, may seem more than a balance for our forms of liberty. The spirit of intrigue, which in absolute governments is confined to courts, walks abroad through the land; and as individuals can accomplish no political purposes single-handed, they band themselves into parties, ostensibly framed for public ends, but aiming only at the acquisition of power. The nominal sovereign, that is, the people, like all other sovereigns, is courted and flattered, and told that it can do no wrong. Its pride is pampered, its passions inflamed, its prejudices made inveterate. Such are the processes, by which other republics have been subverted, and he must be blind who cannot trace them among ourselves. We mean not to exaggerate our dangers. We rejoice to know, that the improvements of society oppose many checks to the love of power. But every wise man, who sees its workings, must dread it as our chief foe.

This passion derives strength and vehemence in our country from the common idea, that political power is the highest prize which society has to offer. We know not a more general delusion, nor is it the least dangerous. Instilled, as it is, in our youth, it gives infinite excitement to political ambition. It turns the active talent of the country to public station as the supreme good, and makes it restless, intriguing, and unprincipled. It calls out hosts of selfish competitors for comparatively few places, and encourages a bold, unblushing pursuit of personal elevation, which a just moral sense and self-respect in the community would frown upon and cover with shame. This prejudice has come down from past ages, and is one of their worst bequests. To govern others has always been thought the highest function on earth. We have a remarkable proof of the

strength and pernicious influence of this persuasion, in the manner in which history has been written. Who fill the page of history? Political and military leaders, who have lived for one end, to subdue and govern their fellow beings. These occupy the foreground, and the people, the human race, dwindle into insignificance, and are almost lost behind their masters. The proper and noblest object of history, is, to record the vicissitudes of society, its spirit in different ages, the causes which have determined its progress and decline, and especially the manifestations and growth of its highest attributes and interests, of intelligence, of the religious principle, of moral sentiment, of the elegant and useful arts, of the triumphs of man over nature and himself. Instead of this, we have records of men in power, often weak, oftener wicked, who did little or nothing for the advancement of their age, who were in no sense its representatives, whom the accident of birth perhaps raised to influence. We have the quarrels of courtiers, the intrigues of cabinets, sieges and battles, royal births and deaths, and the secrets of a palace, that sink of lewdness and corruption. These are the staples of history. The inventions of printing, of gunpowder, and the mariner's compass, were too mean affairs for history to trace. She was bowing before kings and warriors. She had volumes for the plots and quarrels of Leicester and Essex in the reign of Elizabeth, but not a page for Shakespeare; and if Bacon had not filled an office, she would hardly have recorded his name, in her anxiety to preserve the deeds and sayings of that Solomon of his age, James the First.

We have spoken of the supreme importance which is attached to rulers and government, as a prejudice; and we think, that something may be done towards abat-

ing the passion for power, by placing this thought in a clearer light. It seems to us not very difficult to show, that to govern men is not as high a sphere of action as has been commonly supposed, and that those who have obtained this dignity, have usurped a place beyond their due in history and men's minds. We apprehend, indeed, that we are not alone in this opinion; that a change of sentiment on this subject has commenced and must go on; that men are learning, that there are higher sources of happiness and more important agents in human affairs than political rule. It is one mark of the progress of society, that it brings down the public man and raises the private one. It throws power into the hands of untitled individuals, and spreads it through all orders of the community. It multiplies and distributes freely, means of extensive influence, and opens new channels, by which the gifted mind, in whatever rank or condition, may communicate itself far and wide. Through the diffusion of education and printing, a private man may now speak to multitudes, incomparably more numerous than ancient or modern eloquence ever electrified in the popular assembly or the hall of legislation. By these instruments, truth is asserting her sovereignty over nations, without the help of rank, office, or sword; and her faithful ministers will become more and more the lawgivers of the world.

We mean not to deny, we steadily affirm, that government is a great good, and essential to human happiness; but it does its good chiefly by a negative influence, by repressing injustice and crime, by securing property from invasion, and thus removing obstructions to the free exercise of human powers. It confers little positive benefit. Its office is, not to confer happiness, but to

give men opportunity to work out happiness for themselves. Government resembles the wall which surrounds our lands ; a needful protection, but rearing no harvests, ripening no fruits. It is the individual who must choose whether the enclosure shall be a paradise or a waste. How little positive good can government confer ? It does not till our fields, build our houses, weave the ties which bind us to our families, give disinterestedness to the heart, or energy to the intellect and will. All our great interests are left to ourselves ; and governments, when they have interfered with them, have obstructed, much more than advanced them. For example, they have taken religion into their keeping only to disfigure it. So education, in their hands, has generally become a propagator of servile maxims, and an upholder of antiquated errors. In like manner they have paralysed trade by their nursing care, and multiplied poverty by expedients for its relief. Government has almost always been a barrier against which intellect has had to struggle ; and society has made its chief progress by the minds of private individuals, who have outstripped their rulers, and gradually shamed them into truth and wisdom.

Virtue and intelligence are the great interests of a community, including all others, and worth all others ; and the noblest agency is that by which they are advanced. Now we apprehend, that political power is not the most effectual instrument for their promotion, and accordingly we doubt whether government is the only or highest sphere for superior minds. Virtue, from its very nature, cannot be a product of what may be called the direct operation of government ; that is, of legislation. Laws may repress crime. Their office is

to erect prisons for violence and fraud. But moral and religious worth, dignity of character, loftiness of sentiment, all that makes man a blessing to himself and society, lies beyond their province. Virtue is of the soul, where laws cannot penetrate. Excellence is something too refined, spiritual, celestial, to be produced by the coarse machinery of government. Human legislation addresses itself to self-love, and works by outward force. Its chief instrument is punishment. It cannot touch the springs of virtuous feelings, of great and good deeds. Accordingly, rulers, with all their imagined omnipotence, do not dream of enjoining by statute, philanthropy, gratitude, devout sentiment, magnanimity, and purity of thought. Virtue is too high a concern for government. It is an inspiration of God, not a creature of law ; and the agents whom God chiefly honors in its promotion, are those, who, through experience as well as meditation, have risen to generous conceptions of it, and who show it forth, not in empty eulogies, but in the language of deep conviction, and in lives of purity.

Government, then, does little to advance the chief interest of human nature by its direct agency ; and what shall we say of its indirect ? Here we wish not to offend ; but we must be allowed to use that plainness of speech which becomes Christians and freemen. We do fear then, that the indirect influence of government is on the whole adverse to virtue ; and in saying this, we do not speak of other countries, or of different political institutions from our own. We do not mean to say, what all around us would echo, that monarchy corrupts a state, that the air of a court reeks with infection, and taints the higher classes with a licentiousness which descends to their inferiors. We speak of govern-

ment at home ; and we ask wise men to say, whether it ministers most to vice or virtue. We fear, that here, as elsewhere, political power is of corrupting tendency ; and that, generally speaking, public men are not the most effectual teachers of truth, disinterestedness, and incorruptible integrity to the people. An error prevails in relation to political concerns, which necessarily makes civil institutions demoralizing. It is deeply rooted, the growth of ages. We refer to the belief, that public men are absolved in a measure from the everlasting and immutable obligations of morality ; that political power is a prize, which justifies arts and compliances that would be scorned in private life ; that management, intrigue, hollow pretensions, and appeals to base passions, deserve slight rebuke when employed to compass political ends. Accordingly the laws of truth, justice, and philanthropy, have seldom been applied to public as to private concerns. Even those individuals, who have come to frown indignantly on the machinations, the office seeking, and the sacrifices to popularity, which disgrace our internal condition, are disposed to acquiesce in a crooked or ungenerous policy towards foreign nations, by which great advantages may accrue to their own country. Now the great truth on which the cause of virtue rests, is, that rectitude is an eternal, unalterable, and universal law, binding at once heaven and earth, the perfection of God's character, and the harmony and happiness of the rational creation ; and in proportion as political institutions unsettle this great conviction—in proportion as they teach that truth, justice, and philanthropy are local, partial obligations, claiming homage from the weak, but shrinking before the powerful—in proportion as they thus insult the aw-

ful and inviolable majesty of the Eternal Law—in the same proportion they undermine the very foundation of a people's virtue.

In regard to the other great interest of the community, its intelligence, government may do much good by a direct influence; that is, by instituting schools or appropriating revenue for the instruction of the poorer classes. Whether it would do wisely in assuming to itself, or in taking from individuals, the provision and care of higher literary institutions, is a question not easily determined. But no one will doubt, that it is a noble function, to assist and develope the intellect in those classes of the community, whose hard condition exposes them to a merely animal existence. Still the agency of government in regard to knowledge is necessarily superficial and narrow. The great sources of intellectual power and progress to a people, are its strong and original thinkers, be they found where they may. Government cannot, and does not, extend the bounds of knowledge; cannot make experiments in the laboratory, explore the laws of animal or vegetable nature, or establish the principles of criticism, morals, and religion. The energy which is to carry forward the intellect of a people, belongs chiefly to private individuals, who devote themselves to lonely thought, who worship truth, who originate the views demanded by their age, who help us to throw off the yoke of established prejudices, who improve old modes of education or invent better. It is true that great men at the head of affairs, may, and often do, contribute much to the growth of a nation's mind. But it too often happens that their station obstructs rather than aids their usefulness. Their connexion with a party, and the habit of viewing subjects in reference to personal aggrandizement, too often obscure

the noblest intellects, and convert into patrons of narrow views and temporary interests, those, who, in other conditions, would have been the lights of their age, and the propagators of everlasting truth.—From these views of the limited influence of government on the most precious interests of society, we learn that political power is not the noblest power, and that, in the progress of intelligence, it will cease to be coveted as the chief and most honorable distinction on earth.

If we pass now to the consideration of that interest, over which government is expected chiefly to watch, and on which it is most competent to act with power, we shall not arrive at a result very different from what we have just expressed. We refer to property, or wealth. That the influence of political institutions on this great concern is important, inestimable, we mean not to deny. But as we have already suggested, it is chiefly negative. Government enriches a people by removing obstructions to their powers, by defending them from wrong, and thus giving them opportunity to enrich themselves. Government is not the spring of the wealth of nations, but their own sagacity, industry, enterprise, and force of character. To leave a people to themselves, is generally the best service their rulers can render. Time was, when sovereigns fixed prices and wages, regulated industry and expense, and imagined that a nation would starve and perish, if it were not guided and guarded like an infant. But we have learned, that men are their own best guardians, that property is safest under its owner's care, and that generally speaking, even great enterprises can better be accomplished by the voluntary association of individuals, than by the state. Indeed, we are met at every stage of this discussion by the truth, that political power is

a weak engine compared with *individual* intelligence, virtue, and effort ; and we are the more anxious to enforce this truth, because, through an extravagant estimate of government, men are apt to expect from it what they must do for themselves, and to throw upon it the blame which belongs to their own feebleness and improvidence. The great hope of society, is individual character. Civilisation and political institutions are themselves sources of not a few evils, which nothing but the intellectual and moral energy of the private citizen can avert or relieve. Such, for example, are the monstrous inequalities of property, the sad contrasts of condition, which disfigure a large city ; which laws create and cannot remove ; which can only be mitigated and diminished by a principle of moral restraint in the poorer classes, and by a wise beneficence in the rich. The great lesson for men to learn, is, that their happiness is in their own hands ; that it is to be wrought out by their own faithfulness to God and conscience ; that no outward institutions can supply the place of inward principle, of moral energy, whilst this can go far to supply the place of almost every outward aid.

Our remarks will show that our estimate of political institutions, is more moderate than the prevalent one, and that we regard the power, for which ambition has woven so many plots and shed so much blood, as destined to occupy a more and more narrow space, among the means of usefulness and distinction. There is, however, one branch of government, which we hold in high veneration, which we account an unspeakable blessing, and which, for the world, we would not say a word to disparage ; and we are the more disposed to speak of it, because its relative importance seems to us little understood. We refer to the Judiciary, a depart-

ment worth all others in the state. Whilst politicians expend their zeal on transient interests, which perhaps derive their chief importance from their connexion with a party, it is the province of the Judge to apply those solemn and universal laws of rectitude, on which the security, industry, and prosperity of the individual and the state essentially depend. From his tribunal, as from a sacred oracle, go forth the responses of justice. To us there is nothing in the whole fabric of civil institutions so interesting and imposing, as this impartial and authoritative exposition of the principles of moral legislation. The administration of justice in this country, where the Judge, without a guard, without a soldier, without pomp, decides upon the dearest interests of the citizen, trusting chiefly to the moral sentiment of the community for the execution of his decrees, is the most beautiful and encouraging aspect, under which our government can be viewed. We repeat it, there is nothing in public affairs so venerable as the voice of Justice, speaking through her delegated ministers, reaching and subduing the high as well as the low, setting a defence around the splendid mansion of wealth and the lowly hut of poverty, repressing wrong, vindicating innocence, humbling the oppressor, and publishing the rights of human nature to every human being. We confess, that we often turn with pain and humiliation from the hall of Congress where we see the legislator forgetting the majesty of his function, forgetting his relation to a vast and growing community, and sacrificing to his party or to himself the public weal; and it comforts us to turn to the court of justice, where the dispenser of the laws, shutting his ear against all solicitations of friendship or interest, dissolving for a time every private tie, forgetting public opinion, and notwithstanding pub-

lic feeling, asks only what is right. To our courts, the resorts and refuge of weakness and innocence, we look with hope and joy. We boast, with a virtuous pride, that no breath of corruption has as yet tainted their pure air. To this department of government, we cannot ascribe too much importance. Over this, we cannot watch too jealously. Every encroachment on its independence we should resent, and repel, as the chief wrong our country can sustain. Wo, wo to the impious hand, which would shake this most sacred and precious column of the social edifice.

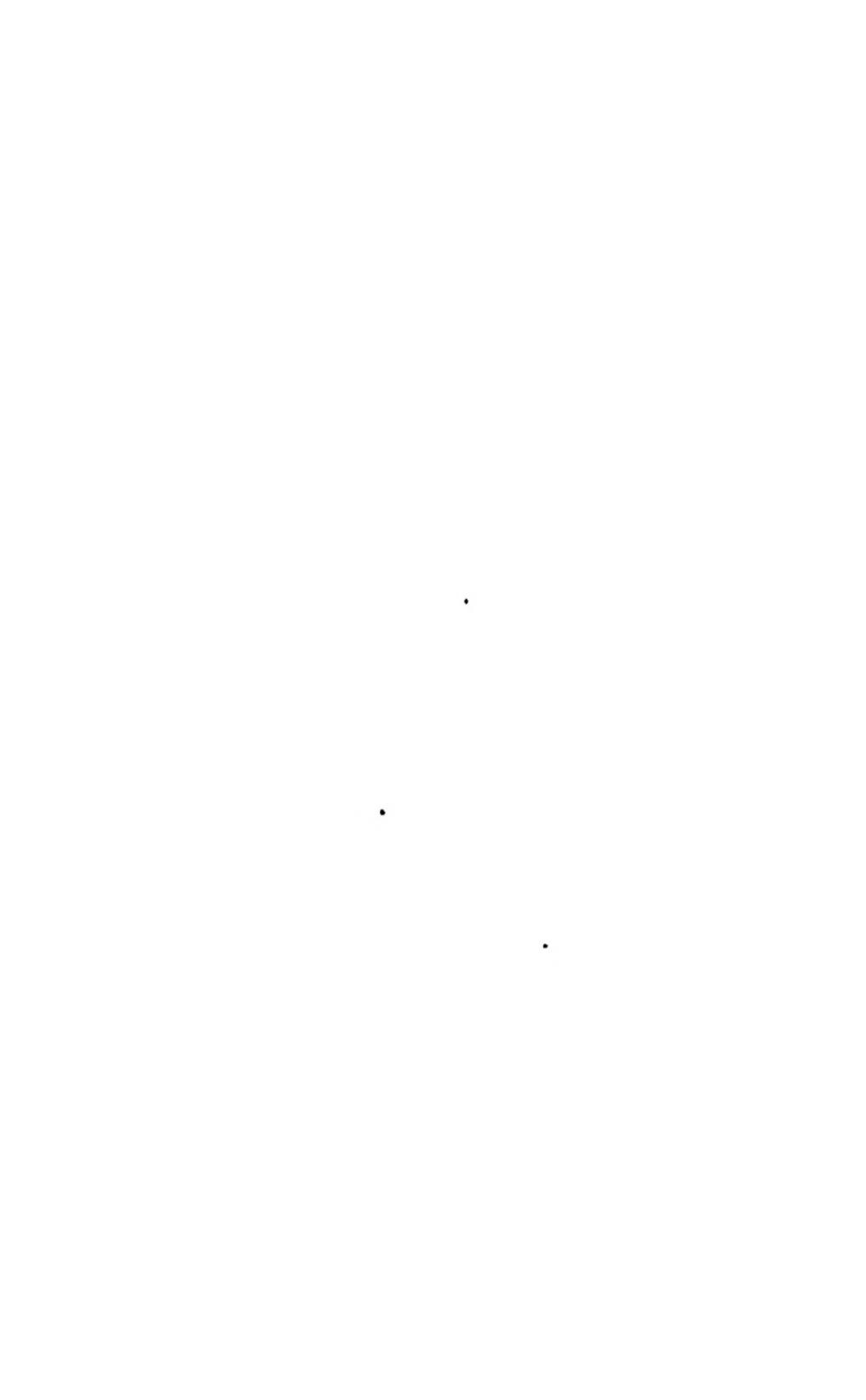
In the remarks which we have now submitted to our readers, we have treated of great topics, if not worthily, yet, we trust, with a pure purpose. We have aimed to expose the passion for dominion, the desire of ruling mankind. We have labored to show the superiority of moral power and influence to that sway which has for ages been seized with eager and bloody hands. We have labored to hold up to unmeasured reprobation, him who would establish an empire of brute force over rational beings. We have labored to hold forth, as the enemy of his race, the man, who, in any way, would fetter the human mind, and subject other wills to his own. In a word, we have desired to awaken others and ourselves, to a just self-reverence, to the free use and expansion of our highest powers, and especially to that moral force, that energy of holy, virtuous purpose, without which we are slaves amidst the freest institutions. Better gifts than these we cannot supplicate from God ; nor can we consecrate our lives to nobler acquisitions.

R E M A R K S

C H A R A C T E R A N D W R I T I N G S

F E N E L O N.

1829.



ON THE CHARACTER AND WRITINGS

FENELON.

Selections from the Writings of Fenelon; with an Appendix, containing a Memoir of his Life. By a LADY. Boston. Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins. 1829. 12mo. pp. 283.

WE perform a very gratifying duty, in introducing and recommending to our readers the book which stands at the head of this article. An attractive and quickening work on practical religion we regard as a valuable accession to our literature. Indeed anything written with power on christian morals and theology is most welcome. It is too true, and a sad truth, that religious books are preeminently dull. If we wished to impoverish a man's intellect, we could devise few means more effectual, than to confine him to what is called a course of theological reading. The very subject, to which, above all others, the writer should bring his whole strength of thought and feeling, which allies itself to our noblest faculties, to which reason, imagination, taste, and genius should consecrate their noblest efforts, is of

all subjects treated most weakly, tamely, and with least attraction. Of course there are splendid exceptions, but we speak of the immense majority of theological books. It is wonderful how men can think and write upon religion to so little effect. That a theme so vast, so sublime as Christianity, embracing God and man, earth and heaven, time and eternity, connected intimately with all human history, deriving lights from all human experience, admitting application to the whole of human life, and proposing as its great end the everlasting progress of the soul—that such a subject should be treated so monotonously as to be proverbially dull, that its professed explorers should be able to plant their footsteps so exactly in the track of their predecessors, that the boundlessness of the field should so seldom tempt an adventurous spirit from the beaten way, is wonderful, and might seem a miracle to a man unacquainted with the vassalage which has broken down the mind in the department of religion. It is true, that those who write on this topic are accustomed to call it sublime ; but they make its sublimity cold and barren, like that of mountain tops wrapped in everlasting snows. We write this, not in severity, but in sorrow of heart ; for we despair of any great progress of the human character or of society, until the energies of the mind shall be bent, as they seldom have been, on those most important subjects and interests of the human mind, morals and religion.

As a striking proof of the poverty of religious literature, and of the general barrenness of the intellect when employed in this field, we may refer to the small amount of original and productive thought in the English church since the days of Larrow and Taylor. Could our voice

be heard in England, we would ask impartial and gifted men, more familiar with their country's history than ourselves, to solve the problem, how a Protestant Establishment, so munificently endowed with the means of improvement, should have done so little, in so long a period, for Christianity, should have produced so few books to interest the higher order of minds. Let not these remarks be misunderstood, as if we were wanting in respect and gratitude to a church, which, with all its defects, has been the bulwark of Protestantism, which has been illustrated by the piety and virtues of such men as Bishops Wilson, Berkeley, and Heber, and in which have sprung up so many institutions, consecrated to humanity, and to the diffusion of the christian faith. We mean not to deny it the honor of having fostered talent in various forms and directions. Among the English clergy we find profound and elegant scholars; we find the names of those giants in ancient learning, Bentley and Parr, and a crowd of proficients in polite literature, of whom Hurd and Jortin are honorable representatives. We speak only of the deficiency of their contributions to moral and religious science. With the exception of Clarke and Butler, we could not easily name any of the Establishment, since the time above specified, who have decidedly carried forward the human intellect. The latter of these is indeed a great name, notwithstanding the alleged obscurities of his style, and worthy to be enrolled among the master spirits of the human race. In regard to commentators, whose function, as commonly executed, holds a second rank in theology, the English church, since the time of Hammond, has produced none of much value, except Bishop Pearce. We presume that she will not lay claim to the heretical Locke, who carried into the interpretation of the scrip-

tures the same force of thought, as into the philosophy of the mind ; or to Whitby, whose strenuous Arminianism, as Orthodoxy would reproachingly say, tapered off into that most suspicious form of Christianity, Unitarianism. We have not yet named two of the most illustrious intellectual chiefs of the church, Warburton and Horsley. Their great powers we most readily own ; but Warburton is generally acknowledged to have wasted his mind, and has left no impression of himself on later times ; whilst Horsley, though he has given us striking, if not judicious, sermons, in a style of unusual vigor, cannot be said to have communicated, in any respect, a new impulse to thought, and in biblical criticism, to which he was zealously devoted, he is one of the last authorities on which a sound mind would lean. To Bishops Lowth and Sherlock we cheerfully acknowledge our obligations ; and we question whether the latter has even yet received his due praise. We have not forgotten, though we have not named, Tillotson, Secker, and Porteus. They are all worthy of remembrance, especially Secker, the clear and wise expounder of christian ethics ; but they added little or nothing to the stock which they received. It may be thought, that we have not been just to the Establishment, in passing over Paley. He has our sincere admiration. On one great topic, which indeed has been worthily treated by many of the clergy, we mean that of christian evidence, he has shed new light. By felicity of arrangement and illustration, he has given an air of novelty to old arguments, whilst he has strengthened his cause by important original proofs. His *Horæ Paulinæ* is one of the few books destined to live. Paley saw what he did see, through an atmosphere of light. He seized on the strong points of his subject with an intuitive sagacity, and has given

his clear, bright thoughts, in a style which has made them the property of his readers almost as perfectly as they were his own. In what then did he fail? We have said, that he was characterized by the distinctness of his vision. He was not, we think, equally remarkable for its extent. He was popular, rather than philosophical. He was deficient in that intellectual thirst, which is a chief element of the philosophical spirit. He had no irrepressible desire to sound the depths of his own nature, or to ascend to wide and all-reconciling views of the works and ways of God. Moral philosophy he carried backward, nor had he higher claims in religious, than in ethical science. His sermons are worthy of all praise, not indeed for their power over the heart, but for their plain and strong expositions of duty, and their awakening appeals to the conscience.

We leave this topic with observing, that in the noblest branch of history, we mean christian or ecclesiastical history, the English church has not furnished a single distinguished name. We have one mournful and decisive proof of this deficiency. The vast majority of English readers learn what they know of the progress and fortunes of their religion, from its foe and insulter, from Gibbon, the apostle of unbelief. The history of Christianity, the most important and sublime theme in this province of literature, has as yet found no writer to do it justice, none to be compared with the great names in civil history. The mightiest revolution in the records of our race remains to be worthily told. We doubt indeed, whether the true character, style, and extent of the work which is needed, are as yet comprehended. That the same rigorous impartiality, the same spirit of philosophical research into causes and effects, is to be carried into religious as into civil history, is im-

perfectly understood. The records of particular sects and churches, instead of exhausting this great subject, are perhaps subordinate parts. We want to know the great conflict between Christianity and Heathenism, and the action and reaction of these systems on one another. We want to know the influences of Christianity on society, politics, manners, philosophy, and literature, and the modifications which it has received in return from all these mighty agents. We know not where history can find a nobler field for its graphic powers, than in the chivalrous ages of Christianity ; nor can it find in its whole range over the past, a subject so fitted, as the spread and fortunes of this religion, to its great end, which is, to throw light on the nature and powers of man, and to carry us deep into the human soul. When is this greatest and most lamentable chasm in our literature to be supplied ?

We have cited the English church as a proof of the unproductiveness of the intellect in religion, and of the barrenness of theological literature. Had we time, we might find corroborations in other sects. In truth a paralysing influence has been working mightily for ages in the christian world, and we ought not to wonder at its results. Free action has been denied to the mind, and freedom is an essential condition of growth and power. A fettered limb moves slowly and operates feebly. The spirit pines away in a prison ; and yet to rear prison walls round the mind has been the chief toil of ages. The mischiefs of this intellectual bondage, are as yet, we conceive, but imperfectly known, and need to be set forth with a new eloquence. If, as we believe, progress be the supreme law of the soul and the very aim of its creation, then no wrong can be inflicted on it so grievous, as to bind it down everlast-

ingly to a fixed, unvarying creed, especially if this creed was framed in an age of darkness, crime, and political and religious strife. This tyranny is preeminently treason against human nature. If growth be the supreme law and purpose of the mind, then the very truth which was suited to one age, may, if made the limit of future ones, become a positive evil ; just as the garment in which childhood sports with ease and joy, would irritate and deform the enlarging frame. God, having framed the soul for expansion, has placed it in the midst of an unlimited universe to receive fresh impulses and impressions without end ; and man, ‘dressed in a little brief authority,’ would sever it from this sublime connexion, and would shape it after his own ignorance or narrow views. The effects are as necessary as they are mournful. The mind, in proportion as it is cut off from free communication with nature, with revelation, with God, with itself, loses its life, just as the body droops, when debarred from the fresh air and the cheering light of heaven. Its vision is contracted, its energies blighted, its movement constrained. It finds health only in action. It is perfect, only in as far as it is self-formed.

—Let us not be misapprehended. We mean not to deny that the mind needs the aid of human instruction, from the cradle to the grave ; but this it needs as a material to act upon, and not as a lesson to be mechanically learned. The great aim of instruction should be to give the mind the consciousness and free use of its own powers. The less of instruction the better, if it only propose to engender a slavish dependence and an inert faith. The soul often owes its best acquisitions to itself. They come to it from glimpses of its own nature which it cannot trace to human teaching, from the whispers of a divine voice, from stirrings and aspirations

of its own unfolding and unbounded energies, from the indistinct dawning of new truths, or from the sudden brightening of old truths, which, if left to act freely, work a mighty revolution within. Against these inspirations, if so they may be called, which belong to the individual, and which are perpetually bursting the limits of received ideas, the spirit of religious tyranny wages its chief and most unrelenting war. It dreads nothing so much as a mind, in which these diviner motions manifest themselves in power. That it should have so succeeded in checking and stifling them, is one of the very mournful reflections forced on us by human history. We have here one great cause of the sterility of theological literature. Religion, by being imposed as a yoke, has subdued the faculties, which it was meant to quicken; and, what is most worthy of remark, like all other yokes, it has often excited a mad resistance, which has sought compensation for past restraints in licentiousness, and disgraced the holy name of freedom, by attaching it to impiety and shameless excess.

A great subject has led us far from our author. We return to him with pleasure. We welcome, as we have said, a book from Fenelon; and we do so because, if not a profound, he was an original thinker, and because, though a Catholic, he was essentially free. He wrote from his own mind, and seldom has a purer mind tabernacled in flesh. He professed to believe in an infallible church; but he listened habitually to the voice of God within him, and speaks of this in language so strong, as to have given the Quakers some plea for ranking him among themselves. So little did he confine himself to established notions, that he drew upon himself the censures of his church, and, like some other Christians whom we could name, has ever been charged with a

refined Deism.* His works have the great charm of coming fresh from the soul. He wrote from experience, and hence, though he often speaks a language which must seem almost a foreign one to men of the world, yet he always speaks in a tone of reality. That he has excesses we mean not to deny ; but they are of a kind which we regard with more than indulgence, almost with admiration. Common fanaticism we cannot away with ; for it is essentially vulgar, the working of animal passions, sometimes of sexual love, and oftener of earthly ambition. But when a pure mind errs, by aspiring after a disinterestedness and purity not granted to our present infant state, we almost reverence its errors ; and still more, we recognise in them an essential truth. They only anticipate and claim too speedily the good for which man was made. They are the misapprehensions of the inspired prophet, who hopes to see in his own day, what he was appointed to promise to remoter ages.

Fenelon saw far into the human heart, and especially into the lurkings of self-love. He looked with a piercing eye through the disguises of sin. But he knew sin, not, as most men do, by bitter experience of its power, so much as by his knowledge and experience of virtue. Deformity was revealed to him by his refined perceptions and intense love of moral beauty. The light, which he carried with him into the dark corners of the human heart, and by which he laid open its most hidden guilt, was that of celestial goodness. Hence, though the severest of censors, he is the most pitying. Not a tone of asperity escapes him. He looks on human error with an angel's tenderness, with tears which an angel might shed, and thus reconciles and binds us to our race, at the very moment of revealing its corruptions.

That Fenelon's views of human nature were dark, too dark, we learn from almost every page of his writings; and at this we cannot wonder. He was early thrown into the very court, from which Rochefoucauld drew his celebrated Maxims, perhaps the spot, above all others on the face of the earth, distinguished and disgraced by selfishness, hypocrisy, and intrigue. When we think of Fenelon in the palace of Louis XIV., it reminds us of a seraph sent on a divine commission into the abodes of the lost ; and when we recollect that in that atmosphere he composed his Telemachus, we doubt whether the records of the world furnish stronger evidence of the power of a divine virtue, to turn temptation into glory and strength, and to make even crowned and prosperous vice a means of triumph and exaltation.—Another cause of Fenelon's unjust views of human life, may be found, we think, in his profession. All professions tend to narrow and obscure the intellect, and none more than that of a priest. We know not indeed a nobler or more useful function than that of the christian minister ; but superstitious notions and an imagined sanctity, have severed him more or less from his race, especially in a church which dooms him to celibacy, and from this unnatural, insulated position, it is impossible for him to judge justly of his kind.—We think too, that Fenelon was led astray by a very common error of exalted minds. He applied too rigorous and unvarying a standard to the multitude. He leaned to the error of expecting the strength of manhood in the child, the harvest in seed-time. On this subject, above all others, we feel that we should speak cautiously. We know that there is a lenity towards human deficiencies full of danger ; but there is, too, a severity far more common, and perhaps more ruinous. Human nature, as ordinarily exhibited,

merits rebuke ; but whoever considers the sore trials, the thick darkness, the impetuous will, the strong passions, under which man commences his moral probation, will temper rebuke with pity and hope. There is a wisdom, perhaps the rarest and sublimest attainment of the intellect, which is at once liberal and severe, indulgent and unbending ; which makes merciful and equitable allowance for the innocent infirmities, the necessary errors, the obstructions and temptations of human beings, and at the same time asserts the majesty of virtue, strengthens the sense of accountableness, binds on us self-denial, and points upward, with a never ceasing importunity, to moral perfection as the great aim and only happiness of the human soul. We will not say that Fenelon was a stranger to this broad, comprehensive wisdom, but we cannot name it as his chief distinction.

We have said that we welcome the book under consideration, because it came from so pure and gifted a mind. We add, that we do not welcome it the less for coming from a Catholic. Perhaps we prize it the more ; for we wish that Protestantism may grow wiser and more tolerant, and we know not a better teacher of these lessons than the character of Fenelon. Such a man is enough to place within the pale of our charity, the whole body to which he belonged. His virtue is broad enough to shield his whole church from that unmeasured, undistinguishing reprobation, with which Protestant zeal has too often assailed it. Whoever remembers, that the Catholic communion numbers in its ranks more than one hundred millions of souls, probably more than all other christian churches together, must shudder at the sentence of proscription, which has sometimes been passed on this immense portion of human beings. It is time that greater justice were done to this ancient

and wide spread community. The Catholic church has produced some of the greatest and best men that ever lived, and this is proof enough of its possessing all the means of salvation. Who, that hears the tone of contempt, in which it is sometimes named, would suspect that Charlemagne, Alfred, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Tasso, Bossuet, Pascal, Des Cartes, were Catholics? Some of the greatest names in arts and arms, on the throne and in the pulpit, were worn by Catholics. To come down to our own times, has not the metropolis of New England witnessed a sublime example of christian virtue in a Catholic bishop? Who, among our religious teachers, would solicit a comparison between himself and the devoted Cheverus? This good man, whose virtues and talents have now raised him to high dignities in church and state, who now wears in his own country the joint honors of an archbishop and a peer, lived in the midst of us, devoting his days and nights, and his whole heart, to the service of a poor and uneducated congregation. We saw him declining, in a great degree, the society of the cultivated and refined, that he might be the friend of the ignorant and friendless; leaving the circles of polished life, which he would have graced, for the meanest hovels; bearing, with a father's sympathy, the burdens and sorrows of his large spiritual family; charging himself alike with their temporal and spiritual concerns; and never discovering, by the faintest indication, that he felt his fine mind degraded by his seemingly humble office. This good man, bent on his errands of mercy, was seen in our streets under the most burning sun of summer, and the fiercest storms of winter, as if armed against the elements by the power of charity. He has left us, but not to be forgotten. He enjoys among us what to such a man must be dearer

than fame. His name is cherished where the great of this world are unknown. It is pronounced with blessings, with grateful tears, with sighs for his return, in many an abode of sorrow and want; and how can we shut our hearts against this proof of the power of the Catholic religion to form good and great men?

These remarks, we trust, will not be perverted. None will suspect us of Catholic partialities. Of all Protestants, we have fewest sympathies with the Romish church. We go farther than our brethren, in rejecting her mysteries, those monuments of human weakness; and as to her claims to infallibility, we repel them with an indignation not to be understood by sects, which, calling themselves Protestant, renounce in words, but assert in practice, a Popish immunity from error, a Popish control over the faith of their brethren. To us, the spiritual tyranny of Popery is as detestable as oriental despotism. When we look back on the history of Papal Rome, we see her, in the days of her power, stained with the blood of martyrs, gorged with rapine, drunk with luxury and crime. But what then? Is it righteous to involve a whole church in guilt, which, after all, belongs to a powerful few? Is it righteous to forget, that Protestantism too has blood on her robes? Is it righteous to forget, that Time, the greatest of reformers, has exerted his silent, purifying power on the Catholic as well as on ourselves? Shall we refuse to see, and to own with joy, that Christianity, even under Papal corruptions, puts forth a divine power? that men cannot wholly spoil it of its celestial efficacy? that, even under its most disastrous eclipse, it still sheds beams to guide the soul to heaven? that there exists in human nature, when loyal to conscience, a power to neutralize error, and to select and incorporate with itself what is

pure and ennobling in the most incongruous system ? Shall we shut our eyes on the fact, that among the clergy of the Romish church have risen up illustrious imitators of that magnanimous apostle, before whom Felix trembled ; men, who, in the presence of nobles and kings, have bowed to God alone, have challenged for his law uncompromising homage, and rebuked in virtue's own undaunted tone triumphant guilt ? Shall we shut our eyes on the fact, that from the bosom of this corrupt church, have gone forth missionaries to the east and the west, whose toils and martyrdom will not be dimmed by comparison with what is most splendid in Protestant self-sacrifice ? We repeat it, not boastingly, but from deep conviction, that we are exceeded by no sect in earnestness of desire for the subversion of the usurped power of the Catholic church, of its false doctrines, and of its childish ceremonies so often substituted for inward virtue. We believe that these have wrought, and still work great evil. Still we see and delight to see, among those who adhere to them, the best attributes of men and Christians. Still we are accustomed to refresh our piety by books which Catholics have written. Still we find one of our highest gratifications in those works of art, in which Catholic genius has embodied its sublime and touching conceptions of the form and countenance of Jesus, has made us awed witnesses of his miracles and cross, companions of his apostles, and admirers, with a tender reverence, of the meek, celestial beauty of his sainted mother. With these impressions, and this experience, we cannot but lift up our voices against Protestant as well as Papal intolerance. We would purify Protestantism from the worst stain and crime of Rome, her cruel bigotry, her nefarious spirit of exclusion.

It would give us pleasure to enlarge on the character of Fenelon, had we not proposed to ourselves another and still more important object in this review.. But, in truth, this grateful duty has been so faithfully performed in the Memoir added to the Selections, that our readers will have no cause to complain of our declining it. This sketch of Fenelon overflows with fervent yet discriminating admiration, and gives utterance to affectionate reverence, with a calmness which wins our confidence. It is not easy to make extracts where the whole is so interesting. But as some of our readers may know Fenelon only by name, and as we wish all to know and love him, we insert a few passages.

'Fenelon, by mixing with all ranks and conditions, by associating with the unfortunate and the sorrowful, by assisting the weak, and by that union of mildness, of energy, and of benevolence, which adapts itself to every character, and to every situation, acquired the knowledge of the moral and physical ills which afflict human nature. It was by this habitual and immediate communication with all classes of society, that he obtained the melancholy conviction of the miseries which distress the greater part of mankind ; and to the profound impression of this truth through his whole life, we must ascribe that tender commiseration for the unfortunate, which he manifests in all his writings, and which he displayed still more powerfully in all his actions.'

pp. 263, 4.

'In the course of his walks, he would often join the peasants, sit down with them on the grass, talk with them, and console them. He visited them in their cottages, seated himself at table with them, and partook of their humble meals. By such kindness and familiarity, he won their affections, and gained access to their minds. As they loved him as a father and friend, they delighted to listen to his instructions, and to submit to his guidance. Long after his death, the old people who had the happiness of seeing him on these occasions, spoke of him with the most tender reverence. "There," they would say, "is the chair on which our good Archbishop used to sit in the midst of us ; we shall see him no more," and then their tears would flow.

The diocese of Cambrai was often the theatre of war, and experienced the cruel ravages of retreating and conquering armies. But an extraordinary respect was paid to Fenelon by the invaders of France. The English, the Germans, and the Dutch, rivalled the inhabitants of Cambrai in their veneration for the Archbishop. All distinctions of religion and sect, all feelings of hatred and jealousy that divided the nations, seemed to disappear in the presence of Fenelon. Military escorts were offered him, for his personal security, but these he declined, and traversed the countries desolated by war, to visit his flock, trusting in the protection of God. In these visits, his way was marked by alms and benefactions. While he was among them, the people seemed to enjoy peace in the midst of war.

He brought together into his palace, the wretched inhabitants of the country whom the war had driven from their homes, and took care of them, and fed them at his own table. Seeing one day that one of these peasants ate nothing, he asked him the reason of his abstinence. "Alas ! my lord," said the poor man, "in making my escape from my cottage, I had not time to bring off my cow, which was the support of my family. The enemy will drive her away, and I shall never find another so good." Fenelon, availing himself of his privilege of safe conduct, immediately set out accompanied by a single servant, and drove the cow back himself to the peasant.

"This," said Cardinal Maury, "is perhaps the finest act of Fenelon's life." He adds, "Alas ! for the man who reads it without being affected." Another anecdote, showing his tenderness to the poor, is thus related of him. A literary man, whose library was destroyed by fire, has been deservedly admired for saying, "I should have profited but little by my books, if they had not taught me how to bear the loss of them." The remark of Fenelon, who lost his in a similar way, is still more simple and touching. "I would much rather they were burnt, than the cottage of a poor peasant."

The virtues of Fenelon give his history the air of romance ; but his name will never die. Transports of joy were heard at Cambrai when his ashes were discovered, which, it was thought, had been scattered by the tempest of the Revolution ; and to this moment the Flemings call him "The Good Archbishop." pp. 274, 5.

The Memoir closes in this touching strain ;—

When we speak of the death of Fenelon, we realize the truth of what we all acknowledge, though few feel, that the good man never

dies ; that, to use the words of one of our eloquent divines, “death was but a circumstance in his being.” We may say, as we read his writings, that we are conscious of his immortality; he is with us ; his spirit is around us ; it enters into and takes possession of our souls. He is at this time, as he was when living in his diocese, the familiar friend of the poor and the sorrowful, the bold reprover of vice, and the gentle guide of the wanderer ; he still says to all, in the words of his Divine Master, “Come to me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

‘In the houses of the unlearned, where the names of Louis the Fourteenth and Bossuet have never entered, except as connected with Fenelon’s, where not a word of his native tongue would be understood, his spirit has entered as a minister of love and wisdom, and a well-worn translation of his Reflections, with a short Memoir of his life, is laid upon the precious word of God. What has thus immortalized Fenelon ? For what is he thus cherished in our hearts ? Is it his learning ? his celebrity ? his eloquence ? No. It is the spirit of Christian love, the spirit of the Saviour of mankind, that is poured forth from all his writings ; of that love that conquers self, that binds us to our neighbour, that raises us to God. This is Fenelon’s power, it is this that touches our souls. We feel that he has entered into the full meaning of that sublime passage in St. John, and made it the motto of his life. “Beloved, let us love one another ; for love is of God ; and every one that loveth; is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is love.”’

pp. 282, 3.

The translator has received and will receive the thanks of many readers for giving them an opportunity of holding communion with the mind of Fenelon. Her selections are judicious, and she has caught much of that simplicity which is the charm of Fenelon’s style. A want of coherence in the thoughts may sometimes be observed ; and this, we suppose, is to be ascribed in part to the author, whose writings seem to be natural breathings of the soul, rather than elaborate works of art ; but still more to the translator, whose delicate task of selecting only what would suit and edify the Protestant mind, must have compelled her to make omissions.

and sudden transitions, not very favorable to order and connexion.

We now come to our principal object. We propose to examine the most distinguishing views, or system of Fenelon. We say, his ‘system,’ for though he seems to write from immediate impulse,* his works possess that unity which belongs to the productions of all superior minds. However he may appear to give his thoughts without elaboration or method, yet one spirit pervades them. We hear everywhere the same mild and penetrating voice, and feel ourselves always in the presence of the same strongly marked mind. What then were Fenelon’s most characteristic views?—It may be well to observe, that our principal aim in this inquiry, is, to secure our readers against what we deem exceptionable in his system. We believe, as we have said, that he is not free from excess. He is sometimes unguarded, sometimes extravagant. He needs to be read with caution, as do all who write from their own deeply excited minds. He needs to be received with deductions and explanations, and to furnish these is our present aim. We fear that the very excellences of Fenelon may shield his errors. Admiration prepares the mind for belief; and the moral and religious sensibility of the reader may lay him open to impressions, which, whilst they leave his purity unstained, may engender causeless solicitudes, and repress a just and cheerful interest in the ordinary pleasures and labors of life.

What then are Fenelon’s characteristic views? We begin with his views of God, which very much determine and color a religious system; and these are simple and affecting. He seems to regard God but in one

light, to think of him but in one character. God always comes to him as the father, as the pitying and purifying friend, of the soul. This spiritual relation of the Supreme Being, is, in the book before us, his all-comprehending, all-absorbing attribute. Our author constantly sets before us God as dwelling in the human mind, and dwelling there, to reprove its guilt, to speak to it with a still voice, to kindle a celestial ray in its darkness, to distil upon it his grace, to call forth its love towards himself, and to bow it by a gentle, rational sway, to chosen, cheerful, entire, subjection to his pure and righteous will. Fenelon had fully received the christian doctrine of God. He believed in him as the Universal Father, as loving every soul, loving the guiltiest soul, and striving with it to reclaim it to himself. This interest of the Creator in the lost and darkened mind, is the thought which predominates in the writings of this excellent man. God's care of the outward world, of men's outward interests, of the concerns of nations, seems scarcely to enter his mind. It is of God, present to the soul, as a reprobate, enlightener, purifier, and guide to perfection, that he loves to speak, and he speaks with a depth of conviction and tenderness, to which, one would think, every reader must respond.

We have seen the predominant view of the Supreme Being in the writings which we are examining. He is a spiritual father, seeking the perfection of every soul which he has made.—Another great question, carrying us still more deeply into Fenelon's mind, now presents itself. In what did he suppose this perfection of the human soul to consist? His views on this subject may be expressed in two words, self-crucifixion and love to God. Through these human perfection is to be sought,

In these, and especially in the last, it consists. According to Fenelon, we are placed between two mighty attractions, self and God; and the only important question for every human being, is, to which of these hostile powers he will determine or surrender his mind? His phrasology on this subject is various, and indeed his writings are, in a great measure, expansions of this single view. He lays open the perpetual collisions between the principle of selfishness and the principle of religious love, and calls us with his whole strength of persuasion, to sacrifice the first, to cherish and enthrone the last. This is his great aim. This he urges in a diversity of forms, some of which may be repeated, as helps to a better apprehension of his doctrine. Thus he calls us 'to die to ourselves, and to live to God;—' 'to renounce our own wills and to choose the will of God as our only rule;—' 'to renounce our own glory and to seek the glory of God;—' 'to distrust ourselves and to put our whole trust in God;—' 'to forget ourselves and to give our thoughts to God;—' 'to renounce ease and to labor for God;—' 'to sacrifice pleasure and to suffer for God;—' 'to silence our own passions and to listen to the voice of God;—' 'to crucify self-love, and to substitute for it the love of God;—' 'to surrender our plans and to leave all things to God.' These passages give us Fenelon's theory of perfection. Self, as he teaches, is the great barrier between the soul and its Maker, and self is to vanish more and more from our thoughts, desires, hopes, trust, and complacency, and God to become all in all. Our own interests, pleasures, plans, advancement, all are to be swallowed up in an entire and unreserved devotion to the will of God.

Such is the doctrine of Fenelon, and it is essentially just. Self-crucifixion or self-sacrifice, and love to God

including love to his creatures, are the chief elements of moral perfection. The pure and noble mind of Fenelon recognised as by instinct, and separated from all inferior adjuncts, these essential constituents or attributes of christian virtue ; and there are passages in which he sets before us their deep and silent workings in the heart, and their beautiful manifestations in the life, with a delicacy, power, and truth, which can hardly be surpassed.

Still we think that Fenelon's exposition of his views is open to objection. We think that his phraseology, notwithstanding its apparent simplicity, is often obscure ; that he has not set the due bounds to his doctrines ; and especially that refined minds, thirsting for perfection, may be led astray by his peculiar mode of exhibiting it. Our objections we will now state more fully.

We have said that self-crucifixion and love to God are, in Fenelon's system, the two chief constituents or elements of virtue and perfection. To these we will give separate attention, although in truth they often coalesce, and always imply one another. We begin with self-crucifixion, or what is often called self-sacrifice, and on this we chiefly differ from the expositions of our author. Perhaps the word *self* occurs more frequently than any other in Fenelon's writings, and he is particularly inclined to place it in contrast with and in opposition to God. According to his common teaching, God and self are hostile influences, having nothing in common ; the one, the concentration of all evil, the other of all good. Self is the principle and the seat of all guilt and misery. He is never weary of pouring reproach on self, and, generally speaking, sets no limits to the duty of putting it to a painful death. Now language like this has led men to very injurious modes of

regarding themselves and their own nature, and made them forgetful of what they owe to themselves. It has thrown a cloud over man's condition and prospects. It has led to self-contempt, a vice as pernicious as pride. A man, when told perpetually to crucify *himself*, is apt to include under this word his whole nature, and we fear that, under this teaching, our nature is repressed, its growth stinted, its free movements chained, and of course its beauty, grace, and power impaired. We mean not to charge on Fenelon the error of which we have spoken, or to hold him responsible for its effects. But we do think that it finds shelter under his phraseology, and we deem it so great, so pernicious, as to need a faithful exposition. Men err in nothing more than in disparaging and wronging their own nature. None are just to themselves. The truth on this great subject is indeed so obscured, that it may startle as a paradox. A human being, justly viewed, instead of being bound to general self-crucifixion, cannot reverence and cherish himself too much. This position, we know, is strong. But strong language is needed to encounter strong delusion. We would teach, that great limitations must be set to the duty of renouncing or denying ourselves, and that no self-crucifixion is virtuous, but that which concurs with, and promotes self-respect. We will unfold our meaning, beginning with positions, which we presume will be controverted by none.

If we first regard man's highest nature, we shall see at once, that to crucify or renounce this, so far from being a duty, would be a crime. The mind, which is our chief distinction, can never be spoken or thought of too reverently. It is God's highest work, his mirror and representative. Its superiority to the outward universe is mournfully overlooked, and is yet most true.

This preeminence we ascribe to the mind, not merely because it can comprehend the universe which cannot comprehend itself, but for still higher reasons. We believe, that the human mind is akin to that intellectual energy which gave birth to nature, and consequently that it contains within itself the seminal and prolific principles from which nature sprung. We believe, too, that the highest purpose of the universe is to furnish materials, scope, and excitements to the mind, in the work of assimilating itself to the Infinite Spirit; that is, to minister to a progress within us, which nothing without us can rival. So transcendent is the mind. No praise can equal God's goodness in creating us after his own spiritual likeness. No imagination can conceive of the greatness of the gift of a rational and moral existence. Far from crucifying this, to unfold it must ever be the chief duty and end of our being, and the noblest tribute we can render to its Author.

We have spoken of the mind, that highest part of ourselves, and of the guilt we should incur by crucifying or renouncing it. But the duty of self-crucifixion requires still greater limitations. Taking human nature as consisting of a body as well as mind, as including animal desire, as framed to receive pleasure through the eye and ear and all the organs of sense, in this larger view, we cannot give it up to the immolation which is sometimes urged. We see in the mixed constitution of man a beautiful whole. We see in the lowest as well as highest capacity an important use; and in every sense an inlet of pleasure not to be disdained. Still more, we believe, that he, in whom the physical nature is unfolded most entirely and harmoniously, who unites to greatest strength of limbs the greatest acuteness of the senses, may, if he will, derive important aids to the

intellect and moral powers from these felicities of his outward frame. We believe, too, that by a beautiful reaction, the mind, in proportion to its culture and moral elevation, gives vigor and grace to the body, and enlarges its sphere of action and enjoyment. Thus, human nature, viewed as a whole, as a union of the worlds of matter and mind, is a work worthy of a divine author, and its universal developement, not its general crucifixion, is the lesson of wisdom and virtue.

We go still farther. The desire of our own individual interest, pleasure, good, the principle which is ordinarily denominated self-love or self-regard, is not to be warred against and destroyed. The tendency of this to excess is indeed our chief moral danger. Self-partiality, in some form or other, enters into and constitutes chiefly, if not wholly, every sin. But excess is not essential to self-regard, and this principle of our nature is the last which could be spared. Nothing is plainer than that to every being his own welfare is more specially committed than that of any other, and that a special sensibility to it is imperiously demanded by his present state. He alone knows his own wants and perils, and the hourly, perpetual claims of his particular lot ; and were he to discard the care of himself for a day, he would inevitably perish. It is a remark of great importance, that the moral danger to which we are exposed by self-love, arises from the very indispensableness of this principle, from the necessity of its perpetual exercise ; for according to a known law of the mind, every passion, unless carefully restrained, gains strength by frequency of excitement and action. The tendency of self-love to excess results from its very importance, or from the need in which we stand of its unceasing agency, and is therefore no reason for its extirpation, and no reproach on human na-

ture. This tendency, however, does exist. It is strong. It is fearful. It is our chief peril. It is the precipice, on the edge of which we always tread. It is the great appointed trial of our moral nature. To this tendency, unresisted, tamely obeyed, we owe the chief guilt and misery of the present state, the extinction of charity, a moral death more terrible than all the calamities of life. This truth Fenelon felt and taught as few have done, and in his powerful warnings against this peril the chief value of his writings lies. He treats with admirable acuteness the windings of self-partiality, shows how it mixes with the best motives, and how it feeds upon, and so consumes our very virtues. All this is true. Still, self-love is an essential part of our nature, and must not and cannot be renounced.

The strong tendency of this principle to excess, of which we have now spoken, explains the strong language, in which Fenelon and others have pointed out our danger from this part of our constitution. But it has also given rise to exaggerated views and modes of expression, which have contributed, perhaps, as much as any cause, to the universal want of a just self-respect. Self-love, from its proneness to excess and its constant movements, has naturally been the object of greater attention than any other principle of action; and men, regarding it not so much in its ordinary operations as in its encroachments and its triumphs over other sentiments, have come to consider it as the chief constituent of human nature. Philosophers, ‘ falsely so called,’ have labored to resolve into it all our affections, to make it the sole spring of life, so that the whole mind, according to their doctrine, may be considered as one energy of self-love. If to these remarks we add, that this principle, as its name imports, has self or the individual for its ob-

ject, we have the explanation of a very important fact in the present discussion. We learn how it is, that self-love has come to be called by the name of *self*, as if it constituted the whole individual, and to be considered as entering into and forming human nature as no other principle does. A man's self-love, especially when unrestrained, is thus thought to be and is spoken of as himself; and hence the duty of crucifying or renouncing himself has naturally been urged by Fenelon, and a host of writers, in the broadest and most unqualified terms.

Now it is not true that self-love is our only principle, or that it constitutes ourselves any more than other principles, and the wrong done to our nature by such modes of speech needs to be resisted. Our nature has other elements or constituents, and vastly higher ones, to which self-love was meant to minister, and which are at war with its excesses. For example, we have reason or intellectual energy, given us for the pursuit and acquisition of truth; and this is essentially a disinterested principle; for truth which is its object, is of a universal, impartial nature. The great province of the intellectual faculty, is, to acquaint the individual with the laws and order of the divine system; a system, which spreads infinitely beyond himself, of which he forms a very small part, which embraces innumerable beings equally favored by God, and which proposes as its sublime and beneficent end, the ever growing good of the whole. Again, human nature has a variety of affections, corresponding to our domestic and most common relations; affections, which in multitudes overpower self-love, which make others the chief objects of our care, which nerve the arm for ever recurring toil by day, and strengthen the wearied frame to forego the slumbers of night. Then there

belongs to every man the general sentiment of humanity, which responds to all human sufferings, to a stranger's tears and groans, and often prompts to great sacrifices for his relief. Above all there is the moral principle, that which should especially be called a man's self, for it is clothed with a kingly authority over his whole nature, and was plainly given to bear sway over every desire. This is eminently a disinterested principle. Its very essence is impartiality. It has no respect of persons. It is the principle of justice, taking the rights of all under its protection, and frowning on the least wrong, however largely it may serve ourselves. This moral nature especially delights in, and enjoins a universal charity, and makes the heart thrill with exulting joy, at the sight or hearing of magnanimous deeds, of perils fronted, and death endured, in the cause of humanity. Now these various principles, and especially the last, are as truly ourselves as self-love. When a man thinks of himself, these ought to occur to him as his chief attributes. He can hardly injure himself more, than by excluding these from his conception of himself, and by making self-love the great constituent of his nature.

We have urged these remarks on the narrow sense often given to the word *self*, because we are persuaded, that it leads to degrading ideas of human nature, and to the pernicious notion, that we practise a virtuous self-sacrifice in holding it in contempt. We would have it understood, that high faculties form this despised self, as truly as low desires; and we would add, that when these are faithfully unfolded, this self takes rank among the noblest beings in the universe. To illustrate this thought, we ask the reader's attention to an important, but much neglected view of virtue and religion. These are commonly spoken of in an abstract manner, as if

they were distinct from ourselves, as if they were foreign existences, which enter the human mind, and dwell there in a kind of separation from itself. Now religion and virtue, wherever they exist, are the mind itself and nothing else. They are human nature, and nothing else. A good man's piety and virtue are not distinct possessions ; they are himself, and all the glory which belongs to them belongs to himself. What is religion? Not a foreign inhabitant, not something alien to our nature, which comes and takes up its abode in the soul. It is the soul itself, lifting itself up to its Maker. What is virtue ? It is the soul, listening to, and revering, and obeying a law which belongs to its very essence, the law of duty. We sometimes smile, when we hear men decrying human nature, and in the same breathing exalting religion to the skies ; as if religion were anything more than human nature, acting in obedience to its chief law. Religion and virtue, as far as we possess them, are ourselves ; and the homage which is paid to these attributes, is in truth a tribute to the soul of man. Self-crucifixion then, should it exclude self-reverence, would be anything but virtue.

We would briefly suggest another train of thought leading to the same result. Self-crucifixion, or self-renunciation, is a work, and a work requires an agent. By whom then is it accomplished ? We answer, by the man himself, who is the subject of it. It is he who is summoned to the effort. He is called by a voice within, and by the law of God, to put forth power over himself, to rule his own spirit, to subdue every passion. Now this inward power, which self-crucifixion supposes and demands, is the most signal proof of a high nature which can be given. It is the most illustrious power which God confers. It is a sovereignty worth more than that

over outward nature. It is the chief constituent of the noblest order of virtues; and its greatness, of course, demonstrates the greatness of the human mind, which is perpetually bound and summoned to put it forth. But this is not all. Self-crucifixion has an object, an end; and what is it? Its great end is, to give liberty and energy to our nature. Its aim is, not to break down the soul, but to curb those lusts and passions, ‘which war against the soul,’ that the moral and intellectual faculties may rise into new life, and may manifest their divine original. Self-crucifixion, justly viewed, is the suppression of the passions, that the power and progress of thought, and conscience, and pure love, may be unrestrained. It is the destruction of the brute, that the angel may unfold itself within. It is founded on our godlike capacities, and the expansion and glory of these is its end. Thus the very duty, which by some is identified with self-contempt, implies and imposes self-reverence. It is the belief and the choice of perfection as our inheritance and our end.

We have thus shown under what great limitations, self-crucifixion, or self-renunciation, is to be understood, and how remote it is from self-contempt. Our purpose was, after closing this discussion, to give a rational interpretation of the phrases in which Fenelon has enjoined this duty. But our limits allow us just to glance at one or two of these. Perhaps he calls upon us to do nothing so often as ‘to renounce our own wills?’ This is a favorite phrase; and what does it imply? that we are to cease to will? Nothing less. The truth is, that the human will is never so strenuous, as in this act which is called the renunciation of itself, and by nothing does it more build up its own energy. The phrase means, that we should sacrifice inclination at the least sugges-

tion of duty. But who does not know, that the mind never puts forth such strength of purpose or will, as in overcoming desire? And what is the highest end and benefit of this warfare with desire? It is, that the mind may accumulate force of moral purpose, that the will may more sternly, unconquerably resolve on the hardest duties and sublimest virtues to which God may call us.

Once more, we are again and again exhorted by Fenelon to 'forget ourselves.' And what means this? Self-oblivion, literally understood, is an impossibility. We may as easily annihilate our being as our self-consciousness. Self-remembrance is in truth a duty, needful to the safety of every hour, and especially necessary to the great work of life, which is the conforming of ourselves, of our whole nature, to the will of God. There is no danger of our thinking of ourselves too much, if we will think justly; that is, if we will view ourselves as what we are, as moral beings, accountable to a divine lawgiver, framed to delight in and to seek virtue, framed for an ever spreading philanthropy, called to sympathize with and to suffer for others, and through this path to ascend to our Original. There are, however, senses in which we cannot too much forget ourselves. Our improvements of whatever kind, our good deeds, our virtues, whenever they are seized upon and magnified by self-love, or so recalled as to lift us above others, and to stifle that sense of deficiency and thirst for progress, by which alone we can be carried forward, these we cannot too earnestly drive from our thoughts. Our distinctions, whether of mind, body, or condition, when they minister to vanity or pride, when they weaken the consciousness of a common nature with the human race, narrow our sympathies, or deprave our judgments, these we cannot be too solicitous to forget. Our pleasures,

when they are so exaggerated by the imagination as to distract and overwhelm the sense of duty, should be forced to quit their grasp on our minds. Such parts or constituents of ourselves we are to forget. Our moral, intellectual, immortal nature we cannot remember too much. Under the consciousness of it, we are always to live.

According to the views now given, self-crucifixion is the subjection or sacrifice of the inferior to the higher principles of our nature. It is the practical recognition of the supremacy and dignity of our rational and moral powers. No duty involves a more reverential view and care of ourselves. We have been the more solicitous to give this view of self-renunciation, because its true spirit is often mistaken, because it is often so set forth as to degrade, instead of exalting the mind. In truth, we feel more and more the importance of bringing men to juster conceptions of the inward gifts with which God has enriched them. We desire nothing so much, as to open their eyes to their own spiritual possessions. We feel indeed the difficulties of the subject. We know that we have to combat with a secret incredulity in many minds. We know, that the clearest expositions will be imperfectly understood by those, who have nothing in their experience to interpret what we utter. The mind, we are aware, can be clearly revealed to itself, only by its own progress. Its capacities of thought, of action, of endurance, of triumphing over pleasure and pain, of identifying itself with other beings, of seeking truth without prejudice and without fear, of uniting itself with God, of sacrificing life to duty, these immortal energies can only be felt to be real, and duly honored, by those in whom they are gradually and steadily unfolded. Still we do not despair of meeting

some response, though faint, in multitudes. Such a spirit, as God has breathed into men, cannot easily exist, without giving some signs of its divine original. In most men, there are some revelations of their own nature, some beams of a light which belongs not to the earth, some sympathies with what is good and great in character, some perceptions of beauty, some gushings from the deep fountain of love in the soul, some thirstings for a purer happiness, some experience of the peculiar joy of a disinterested deed, some dim conceptions at least of their intimate relations to God. Most men understand through experience these testimonies to the secret wealth and immortal destination of the soul; whilst, in not a few, such a measure of intellectual and moral power has been called forth, that nothing is needed but a wise direction of their thoughts upon themselves, to open to them the magnificent prospect of their own spiritual energy, and of the unbounded good into which it may be unfolded. For such we have written. We regard nothing so important to a human being, as the knowledge of his own mind, and of its intimate connexion with the Infinite Mind. Faith in what man contains as a germ in his own breast, faith in what he may become, in what he was framed to be, in that state of power, light, purity, joy, to which Jesus Christ came to exalt him, this faith seems to us the quickening, saving, renovating principle, which God sent his Son to revive in the soul, and happy are they who can spread its empire in the world.

We have finished our remarks on the first element of perfection, according to Fenelon, self-crucifixion. We proceed to the second, love to God. On this topic we intended to enlarge, but have left ourselves little room.

We are happy to say, that we have less to object to Fenelon's expositions under this head, than under the former. Of the grandeur and the happiness of this principle he speaks truly, worthily, in the penetrating language of calm and deep conviction. In one particular, we think him defective. He has not stated, and in truth, very few do state, with sufficient strength and precision, the moral foundation and the moral nature of religion. He has not taught, with sufficient clearness, the great truth, that love to God is from beginning to end the love of virtue. He did not sufficiently feel, that religion is the expansion and most perfect form of the moral faculty of man. He sometimes teaches, that to do God's will, we must renounce ourselves and silence reason ; as if the divine will were not in accordance with our faculties ; as if it were something dark and mysterious ; as if to follow it, we must quench the light of our own minds. Now the truth is, that the divine will is in harmony with our nature. It is God's approbation and injunction of that moral rectitude, of which the great lines are written on the human soul, and to which reason and conscience, even when they fail to secure obedience, do yet secretly, and in no small degree, respond. The human mind and the divine law are not distinct and disconnected things. If man were not a law to himself, he could not receive the revelation of a law from Heaven. Were not the principle of duty an essential part of his mind, he could be bound to no obedience. Religion has its foundation in our moral nature, and is indeed its most enlarged and glorious form, and we lament that this great truth does not shine more brightly in the pages of Fenelon. We intended to give to it a particular discussion ; but as we cannot do it justice in the present article, we prefer to dismiss it, and to offer a few miscellaneous remarks on

that sentiment of love towards God on which our author so perpetually insists.

We are aware that to some men Fenelon may seem an enthusiast. Some may doubt or deny the possibility of that strong, deep, supreme affection towards the Supreme Being, with which Fenelon's book overflows. We wonder at this skepticism. We know no property of human nature more undoubted, than its capacity and fulness of affection. We see its love overflowing in its domestic connexions, in friendships, and especially in its interest in beings separated by oceans and the lapse of ages. Let it not be said, that the affections, to which we here refer, have fellow beings for their objects, and do not therefore prove our capacity of religious attachment. The truth is, that one spirit runs through all our affections, as far as they are pure; and love to mankind, directed aright, is the germ and element of love to the Divinity. Whatever is excellent and venerable in human beings, is of God, and in attaching ourselves to it we are preparing our hearts for its Author. Whoever sees and recognises the moral dignity of impartial justice and disinterested goodness in his fellow creatures, has begun to pay homage to the attributes of God. The first emotion awakened in the soul, we mean filial attachment, is the dawning of love to our Father in Heaven. Our deep interest in the history of good and great men; our veneration towards enlightened legislators, our sympathy with philanthropists, our delight in mighty efforts of intellect consecrated to a good cause, all these sentiments prove our capacity of an affectionate reverence to God; for he is at once the inspirer and the model of this intellectual and moral grandeur in his creatures. We even think, that our love of nature has an affinity with the love of God, and was meant as a

preparation for it ; for the harmonies of nature are only his wisdom made visible ; the heavens, so sublime, are a revelation of his immensity ; and the beauty of creation images to us his overflowing love and blessedness. To us, hardly anything seems plainer, than that the soul was made for God. Not only its human affections guide it to him ; not only its deep wants, its dangers, and helplessness, guide it to him ; there are still higher indications of the end for which it was made. It has a capacity of more than human love, a principle or power of adoration, which cannot bound itself to finite natures, which carries up the thoughts above the visible universe, and which, in approaching God, rises into a solemn transport, a mingled awe and joy, prophetic of a higher life ; and a brighter signature of our end and happiness cannot be conceived.

We are aware that it may be objected, that many and great obstructions to a supreme love of God belong to our very constitution and condition, and that these go far to disprove the doctrine of our being framed for religion as our chief good. But this argument does not move us. We learn from every survey of man's nature and history, that he is ordained to approach the end of his creation through many and great obstructions ; that effort is the immutable law of his being ; that a good, in proportion to its grandeur, is encompassed with hardship. The obstructions to religion are not greater than those to knowledge ; and accordingly history gives as dark views of human ignorance, as of human guilt. Yet who, on this ground, denies that man was formed for knowledge, that progress in truth is the path of nature, and that he has impulses which are to carry forward his intellectual powers without end ? It is God's pleasure, in his provisions for the mind, as well as for the body,

to give us in a rude state the materials of good, and to leave us to frame from them, amidst much conflict, a character of moral and religious excellence ; and in this ordination we see his wise benevolence ; for by this we may rise to the unutterable happiness of a free and moral union with our Creator. We ought to add, that the obstructions to the love of God do not lie wholly in ourselves. Perhaps the greatest is a false theology. This interposes thick clouds between the soul and its Maker. It darkens and dishonors God and his works, and leaves nothing to sustain our trust and love.

The motives, which are most commonly urged for cherishing supreme affection towards God, are drawn from our frailty and weakness, and from our need of more than human succour in the trials of life and in the pains of death. But religion has a still higher claim. It answers to the deepest want of human nature. We refer to our want of some being or beings, to whom we may give our hearts, whom we may love more than ourselves, for whom we may live and be ready to die, and whose character responds to that idea of perfection, which, however dim and undefined, is an essential element of every human soul. We cannot be happy beyond our love. At the same time, love may prove our chief wo, if bestowed unwisely, disproportionately, and on unworthy objects ; if confined to beings of imperfect virtue, with whose feelings we cannot always innocently sympathize, whose interests we cannot always righteously promote, who narrow us to themselves instead of breathing universal charity, who are frail, mutable, exposed to suffering, pain, and death. To secure a growing happiness and a spotless virtue, we need for the heart a being worthy of its whole treasure of love, to whom we may consecrate our whole existence, in

approaching whom we enter an atmosphere of purity and brightness, in sympathizing with whom we cherish only noble sentiments, in devoting ourselves to whom we espouse great and enduring interests, in whose character we find the spring of an ever enlarging philanthropy, and by attachment to whom, all our other attachments are hallowed, protected, and supplied with tender and sublime consolations under bereavement and blighted hope: Such a being is God.

The word which Fenelon has most frequently used to express the happiness to which the mind ascends by a supreme love of God, is ‘peace,’ perhaps the most expressive which language affords. We fear, however, that its full import is not always received. There is a twofold peace. The first is negative. It is relief from disquiet and corroding care. It is repose after conflict and storms. But there is another and a higher peace, to which this is but the prelude, ‘a peace of God which passeth all understanding,’ and properly called ‘the kingdom of heaven within us.’ This state is anything but negative. It is the highest and most strenuous action of the soul, but an entirely harmonious action, in which all our powers and affections are blended in a beautiful proportion, and sustain and perfect one another. It is more than silence after storms. It is as the concord of all melodious sounds. Has the reader never known a season, when, in the fullest flow of thought and feeling, in the universal action of the soul, an inward calm, profound as midnight silence, yet bright as the still summer noon, full of joy, but unbroken by one throb of tumultuous passion, has been breathed through his spirit, and given him a glimpse and presage of the serenity of a happier world? Of this character is the peace of religion. It is a conscious harmony with God

and the creation, an alliance of love with all beings, a sympathy with all that is pure and happy, a surrender of every separate will and interest, a participation of the spirit and life of the universe, an entire concord of purpose with its Infinite Original. This is peace, and the true happiness of man ; and we think that human nature has never entirely lost sight of this its great end. It has always sighed for a repose, in which energy of thought and will might be tempered with an all-pervading tranquillity. We seem to discover aspirations after this good, a dim consciousness of it, in all ages of the world. We think we see it in those systems of Oriental and Grecian philosophy, which proposed, as the consummation of present virtue, a release from all disquiet, and an intimate union and harmony with the Divine Mind. We even think, that we trace this consciousness, this aspiration, in the works of ancient art which time has spared to us, in which the sculptor, aiming to embody his deepest thoughts of human perfection, has joined with the fulness of life and strength, a repose which breathes into the spectator an admiration as calm as it is exalted. Man, we believe, never wholly loses the sentiment of his true good. There are yearnings, sighings, which he does not himself comprehend, which break forth alike in his prosperous and adverse seasons, which betray a deep, indestructible faith in a good that he has not found, and which, in proportion as they grow distinct, rise to God, and concentrate the soul in him, as at once its life and rest, the fountain at once of energy and of peace.

In the remarks, which have now been suggested by the writings of Fenelon, we have aimed to free religion from exaggerations, which, we fear, weaken its influ-

ence over reasonable men, and at the same time to illustrate its dignity and happiness. We want time, or we should enlarge on the importance of this great subject to every human being. We cannot however leave it, without earnestly recommending it to the attention of men of superior minds. The neglect which it generally receives from these is one of the most discouraging signs of our times. The claims of religion on intelligent men are not yet understood, and the low place which it holds among the objects of liberal inquiry, will one day be recollect ed as the shame of our age. Some remarks on this topic may form a not unsuitable conclusion to the present article.

It is, we fear, an unquestionable fact, that religion, considered as an intellectual subject, is in a great measure left to a particular body of men, as a professional concern ; and the fact is as much to be wondered at as deplored. It is wonderful that any mind, and especially a superior one, should not see in religion the highest object of thought. It is wonderful that the infinite God, the noblest theme of the universe, should be considered as a monopoly of professed theologians ; that a subject, so vast, awful, and exalting, as our relation to the Divinity, should be left to technical men, to be handled so much for sectarian purposes. Religion is the property and dearest interest of the human race. Every man has an equal concern in it. It should be approached with an independence on human authority. It should be rescued from all the factions, which have seized upon it as their particular possession. Men of the highest intellect should feel, that, if there be a God, then his character and our relation to him throw all other subjects into obscurity, and that the intellect, if not consecrated to him, can never attain its true use, its full

dimensions, and its proper happiness. Religion, if it be true, is central truth, and all knowledge, which is not gathered round it, and quickened and illuminated by it, is hardly worthy the name. To this great theme we would summon all orders of mind, the scholar, the statesman, the student of nature, and the observer of life. It is a subject to which every faculty and every acquisition may pay tribute, which may receive aids and lights from the accuracy of the logician, from the penetrating spirit of philosophy, from the intuitions of genius, from the researches of history, from the science of the mind, from physical science, from every branch of criticism, and, though last not least, from the spontaneous suggestions and the moral aspirations of pure but unlettered men.

It is a fact which shocks us, and which shows the degraded state of religion, that not a few superior minds look down upon it as a subject beneath their investigation. Though allied with all knowledge, and especially with that of human nature and human duty, it is regarded as a separate and inferior study, particularly fitted to the gloom of a convent, and the seclusion of a minister. Religion is still confounded, in many and in gifted minds, with the jargon of monks, and the subtleties and strifes of theologians. It is thought a mystery, which, far from coalescing, wars with our other knowledge. It is never ranked with the sciences which expand and adorn the mind. It is regarded as a method of escaping future ruin, not as a vivifying truth through which the intellect and heart are alike to be invigorated and enlarged. Its bearing on the great objects of thought and the great interests of life is hardly suspected. This degradation of religion into a technical study; this disjunction of it from morals, from philosophy, from the

various objects of liberal research, has done it infinite injury, has checked its progress, has perpetuated errors which gathered round it in times of barbarism and ignorance, has made it a mark for the sophistry and ridicule of the licentious, and has infused a lurking skepticism into many powerful understandings. Nor has religion suffered alone. The whole mind is darkened by the obscuration of this its central light. Its reasonings and judgments become unstable through want of this foundation to rest upon. Religion is to the whole sphere of truth, what God is to the universe, and in dethroning it, or confining it to a narrow range, we commit very much such an injury on the soul, as the universe would suffer, were the Infinite Being to abandon it, or to contract his energy to a small province of his creation.

The injury done to literature by divorcing it from religion, is a topic worthy of separate discussion. Literature has thus lost power and permanent interest. It has become, in a great measure, superficial, an image of transient modes of thought and of arbitrary forms of life, not the organ and expression of immutable truth, and of deep workings of the soul. We beg not to be misunderstood. We have no desire that literature should confine itself wholly or chiefly to religious topics, and we hardly know a greater calamity which it could incur, than by degenerating into religious cant. Next to profaneness, we dread the affectation of piety and the mechanical repetition of sacred phraseology. We only lament, that literature has so generally been the product and utterance of minds, which have not lived, thought, and written, under the light of a rational and sublime faith. Severed from this, it wants the principle of immortality. We do not speak lightly when we say, that all works of the intellect, which have not in some meas-

ure been quickened by the spirit of religion, are doomed to perish or to lose their power; and that genius is preparing for itself a sepulchre, when it disjoins itself from the Universal Mind. Religion is not always to remain in its present dark, depressed condition. Already there are signs of a brighter day. It begins to be viewed more generously. It is gradually attracting to itself superior understandings. It is rising from the low rank of a professional, technical study; and asserting its supremacy among the objects of the mind. A new era, we trust, is opening upon the world, and all literature will feel its power. In proportion as the true and sublime conception of God shall unfold itself in the soul, and shall become there a central sun, shedding its beams on all objects of thought, there will be a want of sympathy with all works which have not been quickened by this heavenly influence. It will be felt that the poet has known little of nature, that he has seen it only under clouds, if he have not seen it under this celestial light. It will be felt, that man, the great subject of literature, when viewed in separation from his Maker and his end, can be as little understood and portrayed, as a plant torn from the soil in which it grew, and cut off from communication with the clouds and sun.

We are aware that objections will spring up to the doctrine, that all literature should be produced under the influence of religion. We shall be told, that in this way literature will lose all variety and spirit, that a monotonous and solemn hue will spread itself over writing, and that a library will have the air of a tomb. We do not wonder at this fear. Religion has certainly been accustomed to speak in sepulchral tones, and to wear any aspect but a bright and glowing one. It has lost its free and various movement. But let us not ascribe to its

nature, what has befallen it from adverse circumstances. The truth is, that religion, justly viewed, surpasses all other principles, in giving a free and manifold action to the mind. It recognises in every faculty and sentiment the workmanship of God, and assigns a sphere of agency to each. It takes our whole nature under its guardianship, and with a parental love ministers to its inferior as well as higher gratifications. False religion mutilates the soul, sees evil in our innocent sensibilities, and rules with a tyrant's frown and rod. True religion is a mild and lawful sovereign, governing to protect, to give strength, to unfold all our inward resources. We believe, that under its influence, literature is to pass its present limits, and to put itself forth in original forms of composition. Religion is of all principles most fruitful, multiform, and unconfined. It is sympathy with that Being, who seems to delight in diversifying the modes of his agency, and the products of his wisdom and power. It does not chain us to a few essential duties, or express itself in a few unchanging modes of writing. It has the liberality and munificence of nature, which not only produces the necessary root and grain, but pours forth fruits and flowers. It has the variety and bold contrasts of nature, which, at the foot of the awful mountain, scoops out the freshest, sweetest valleys, and embosoms in the wild, troubled ocean, islands, whose vernal airs, and loveliness, and teeming fruitfulness, almost breathe the joys of Paradise. Religion will accomplish for literature what it most needs; that is, will give it depth, at the same time that it heightens its grace and beauty. The union of these attributes is most to be desired. Our literature is lamentably superficial, and to some the beautiful and the superficial even seem to be naturally conjoined. Let not beauty be so wronged. It resides

chiefly in profound thoughts and feelings. It overflows chiefly in the writings of poets, gifted with a sublime and piercing vision. A beautiful literature springs from the depth and fulness of intellectual and moral life, from an energy of thought and feeling, to which nothing, as we believe, ministers so largely as enlightened religion.

So far from a monotonous solemnity overspreading literature in consequence of the all-pervading influence of religion, we believe, that the sportive and comic forms of composition, instead of being abandoned, will only be refined and improved. We know that these are supposed to be frowned upon by piety; but they have their root in the constitution which God has given us, and ought not therefore to be indiscriminately condemned. The propensity to wit and laughter does indeed, through excessive indulgence, often issue in a character of heartless levity, low mimickry, or unfeeling ridicule. It often seeks gratification in regions of impurity, throws a gaiety round vice, and sometimes even pours contempt on virtue. But, though often and mournfully perverted, it is still a gift of God, and may and ought to minister, not only to innocent pleasure, but to the intellect and the heart. Man was made for relaxation as truly as for labor; and by a law of his nature, which has not received the attention it deserves, he finds perhaps no relaxation so restorative, as that in which he reverts to his childhood, seems to forget his wisdom, leaves the imagination to exhilarate itself by sportive inventions, talks of amusing incongruities in conduct and events, smiles at the innocent eccentricities and odd mistakes of those whom he most esteems, allows himself in arch allusions or kind-hearted satire, and transports himself into a world of ludicrous combinations. We have said, that on these occasions, the mind

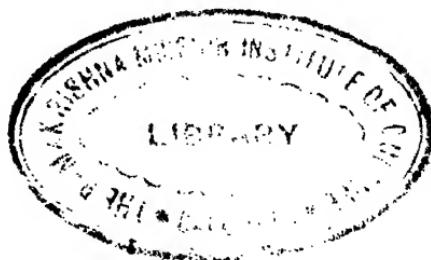
seems to put off its wisdom ; but the truth is, that in a pure mind, wisdom retreats, if we may so say, to its centre, and there unseen, keeps guard over this transient folly, draws delicate lines which are never to be passed in the freest moments, and, like a judicious parent watching the sports of childhood, preserves a stainless innocence of soul in the very exuberance of gaiety. This combination of moral power with wit and humor, with comic conceptions and irrepressible laughter, this union of mirth and virtue, belongs to an advanced stage of the character ; and we believe, that in proportion to the diffusion of an enlightened religion, this action of the mind will increase, and will overflow in compositions, which, joining innocence to sportiveness, will communicate unmixed delight. Religion is not at variance with occasional mirth. In the same character, the solemn thought and the sublime emotions of the improved Christian, may be joined with the unanxious freedom, buoyancy and gaiety of early years.

We will add but one more illustration of our views. We believe that the union of religion with genius, will favor that species of composition to which it may seem at first to be least propitious. We refer to that department of literature, which has for its object the delineation of the stronger and more terrible and guilty passions. Strange as it may appear, these gloomy and appalling features of our nature may be best comprehended and portrayed by the purest and noblest minds. The common idea is, that overwhelming emotions, the more they are experienced, can the more effectually be described. We have one strong presumption against this doctrine. Tradition leads us to believe, that Shakespeare, though he painted so faithfully and fearfully the storms of passion, was a calm and cheerful man. The

passions are too engrossed by their objects to meditate on themselves; and none are more ignorant of their growth and subtle workings than their own victims. Nothing reveals to us the secrets of our own souls like religion; and in disclosing to us, in ourselves, the tendency of passion to absorb every energy, and to spread its hues over every thought, it gives us a key to all souls; for in all, human nature is essentially one, having the same spiritual elements, and the same grand features. No man, it is believed, understands the wild and irregular motions of the mind, like him in whom a principle of divine order has begun to establish peace. No man knows the horror of thick darkness which gathers over the slaves of vehement passion, like him who is rising into the light and liberty of virtue. There is indeed a selfish shrewdness, which is thought to give a peculiar and deep insight into human nature. But the knowledge, of which it boasts, is partial, distorted, and vulgar, and wholly unfit for the purposes of literature. We value it little. We believe, that no qualification avails so much to a knowledge of human nature in all its forms, in its good and evil manifestations, as that enlightened, celestial charity, which religion alone inspires; for this establishes sympathies between us and all men, and thus makes them intelligible to us. A man, imbued with this spirit, alone contemplates vice, as it really exists, and as it ought always to be described. In the most depraved fellow beings he sees partakers of his own nature. Amidst the terrible ravages of the passions, he sees conscience, though prostrate, not destroyed, nor wholly powerless. He sees the proofs of an unextinguished moral life, in inward struggles, in occasional relentings, in sighings for lost innocence, in reviving throbs of early affections, in the sophistry by

which the guilty mind would become reconciled to itself, in remorse, in anxious forebodings, in despair, perhaps in studied recklessness and cherished self-forgetfulness. These conflicts between the passions and the moral nature, are the most interesting subjects in the branch of literature to which we refer, and we believe, that to portray them with truth and power, the man of genius can find in nothing such effectual aid, as in the developement of the moral and religious principles in his own breast.

We have given but a superficial view of a great subject. The connexion of religion with intellect and literature is yet to be pointed out. We conclude with expressing our strong conviction that the human mind will become more various, piercing, and all-comprehending, more capable of understanding and expressing the solemn and the sportive, the terrible and the beautiful, the profound and the tender, in proportion as it shall be illumined and penetrated by the true knowledge of God. Genius, intellect, imagination, taste, and sensibility, must all be baptized into religion, or they will never know, and never make known, their real glory and immortal power. .



THE
MORAL ARGUMENT
AGAINST CALVINISM,
ILLUSTRATED

IN A REVIEW OF A WORK ENTITLED

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY, DESIGNED MORE
ESPECIALLY FOR THE EDIFICATION AND INSTRUCTION OF FAMILIES.—
BOSTON, 1809.

THE work, of which we have prefixed the title to this article, was published several years ago, and has been read by many among us with pleasure and profit. But it is not known as widely as it should be, and we wish to call to it the notice which it merits. It is not an original work, but was compiled chiefly from the writings of the Rev. Robert Fellowes, whose name is probably known to most of our readers. The title we think not altogether happy, because it raises an expectation which the book does not answer. We should expect from it a regular statement of the great truths of our religion ; but we find, what at present is perhaps as useful, a vindication of Christianity from the gross errors, which Calvinism has labored to identify with this divine system. This may easily be supposed from the table of contents. The book professes to treat of the following subjects ;—The nature of religion and the mistakes that occur on that subject ; the free-agency and accountability of man ; the fall of Adam, and original sin ; the

doctrine of faith in general, and of religious faith in particular ; the doctrine of works ; the doctrine of regeneration ; the doctrine of repentance ; the doctrine of grace ; the doctrine of election and reprobation ; the doctrine of perseverance ; the visiting of the iniquities of the fathers upon the children ; and the sin against the Holy Ghost.—To those who are acquainted with the five thorny points of Calvinism, the design of this compilation will be sufficiently understood from the enumeration of topics now given ; and few designs are more praise-worthy, than to free Christianity from the reproach brought upon it by that system.

The work under review is professedly popular in its style and mode of discussion. It has little refined and elaborate reasoning, but appeals to the great moral principles of human nature, and to the general strain of the scriptures. It expresses strongly and without circumlocution the abhorrence with which every mind, uncorrupted by false theology, must look on Calvinism ; and although some of its delineations may be overcharged, yet they are substantially correct, and their strength is their excellence. The truth is, that nothing is so necessary on this subject as to awaken moral feeling in men's breasts. Calvinism owes its perpetuity to the influence of fear in palsying the moral nature. Men's minds and consciences are subdued by terror, so that they dare not confess, even to themselves, the shrinking, which they feel, from the unworthy views which this system gives of God ; and by thus smothering their just abhorrence, they gradually extinguish it, and even come to vindicate in God what would disgrace his creatures. A voice of power and solemn warning is needed to rouse them from this lethargy, to give them a new and a juster dread, the dread of incurring God's dis-

pleasure, by making him odious, and exposing religion to insult and aversion.—In the present article, we intend to treat this subject with great freedom. But we beg that it may be understood that by Calvinism we intend only the peculiarities or distinguishing features of that system. We would also have it remembered, that these peculiarities form a small part of the religious faith of a Calvinist. He joins with them the general, fundamental, and most important truths of Christianity, by which they are always neutralized in a greater or less degree, and in some cases nullified. Accordingly it has been our happiness to see in the numerous body by which they are professed, some of the brightest examples of christian virtue. Our hostility to the doctrine does not extend to its advocates. In bearing our strongest testimony against error, we do not the less honor the moral and religious worth with which it is often connected.

The book under review will probably be objected to by theologians, because it takes no notice of a distinction, invented by Calvinistic metaphysicians, for rescuing their doctrines from the charge of aspersing God's equity and goodness. We refer to the distinction between *natural* and *moral inability*, a subtlety which may be thought to deserve some attention, because it makes such a show in some of the principal books of this sect. But with due deference to its defenders, it seems to us groundless and idle, a distinction without a difference. An inability to do our duty, which is *born* with us, is to all intents and according to the established meaning of the word, *natural*. Call it moral, or what you please, it is still a part of the nature which our Creator gave us, and to suppose that he punishes us for it, because it is an inability seated in the will, is

just as absurd, as to suppose him to punish us for a weakness of sight or of a limb. Common people cannot understand this distinction, cannot split this hair; and it is no small objection to Calvinism, that, according to its ablest defenders, it can only be reconciled to God's perfections, by a metaphysical subtlety, which the mass of people cannot comprehend.

If we were to speak as critics of the style of this book, we should say, that whilst generally clear, and sometimes striking, it has the faults of the style which was very current not many years ago in this country, and which, we rejoice to say, is giving place to a better. The style to which we refer, and which threatened to supplant good writing in this country, intended to be elegant, but fell into jejuneness and insipidity. It delighted in words and arrangements of words, which were little soiled by common use, and mistook a spruce neatness for grace. We had a Procrustes' bed for sentences, and there seemed to be a settled war between the style of writing and the free style of conversation. Times we think have changed. Men have learned more to write as they speak, and are ashamed to dress up familiar thoughts, as if they were just arrived from a far country, and could not appear in public without a foreign and studied attire. They have learned that common words are common, precisely because most fitted to express real feeling and strong conception, and that the circuitous, measured phraseology, which was called elegance, was but the parade of weakness. They have learned that words are the signs of thought, and worthless counterfeits without it, and that style is good, when, instead of being anxiously cast into a mould, it seems a free and natural expression of thought, and gives to ~~it~~ with power the workings of the author's mind.

We have been led to make these remarks on the style which in a degree marks the book before us, from a persuasion that this mode of writing has been particularly injurious to religion, and to rational religion. It has crept into sermons perhaps more than into any other compositions, and has imbued them with that soporific quality, which they have sometimes been found to possess in an eminent degree. How many hearers have been soothed by a smooth watery flow of words, a regular chime of sentences, and elegantly rocked into repose. We are aware, that preachers, above all writers, are excusable for this style, because it is the easiest; and having too much work to do, they must do it of course in the readiest way. But we mourn the necessity, and mourn still more the effect.—It gives us great pleasure to say, that in this particular, we think we perceive an improvement taking place in this region. Preaching is becoming more direct, aims more at impression, and seeks the nearest way to men's hearts and consciences. We often hear from the pulpit strong thought in plain and strong language. It is hoped, from the state of society, that we shall not fly from one extreme to another, and degenerate into coarseness; but perhaps even this is a less evil than tameness and insipidity.

To return; the principal argument against Calvinism in the General View of Christian Doctrines is the *moral argument*, or that which is drawn from the inconsistency of the system with the divine perfections. It is plain that a doctrine which contradicts our best ideas of goodness and justice, cannot come from the just and good God, or be a true representation of his character. This moral argument has always been powerful to the pulling down of the strong holds of Cal-

vinism. Even in the dark period, when this system was shaped and finished at Geneva, its advocates often writhed under the weight of it; and we cannot but deem it a mark of the progress of society, that Calvinists are more and more troubled with the palpable repugnance of their doctrines to God's nature, and accordingly labor to soften and explain them, until in many cases the name only is retained. If the stern reformer of Geneva could lift up his head, and hear the mitigated tone in which some of his professed followers dispense his fearful doctrines, we fear, that he could not lie down in peace, until he had poured out his displeasure on their cowardice and degeneracy. He would tell them with a frown, that *moderate Calvinism* was a solecism, a contradiction in terms, and would bid them in scorn to join their real friend, Arminius. Such is the power of public opinion and of an improved state of society on creeds, that naked, undisguised Calvinism is not very fond of showing itself, and many of consequence know imperfectly what it means. What then is the system against which the View of Christian Doctrines is directed?

Calvinism teaches, that in consequence of Adam's sin in eating the forbidden fruit, God brings into life all his posterity with a nature wholly corrupt, so that they are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually. It teaches, that all mankind, having fallen in Adam, are under God's wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. It teaches, that from this ruined race God out of his mere good pleasure has elected a certain number to be saved by Christ, not induced to this choice by any foresight of

their faith or good works, but wholly by his free grace and love ; and that having thus predestinated them to eternal life, he renews and sanctifies them by his almighty and special agency, and brings them into a state of grace, from which they cannot fall and perish. It teaches, that the rest of mankind he is pleased to pass over, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the honor of his justice and power; in other words, he leaves the rest to the corruption in which they were born, withholds the grace which is necessary to their recovery, and condemns them to ‘most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell fire forever.’ Such is Calvinism, as gathered from the most authentic records of the doctrine. Whoever will consult the famous Assembly’s Catechisms and Confession, will see the peculiarities of the system in all their length and breadth of deformity. A man of plain sense, whose spirit has not been broken to this creed by education or terror, will think that it is not necessary for us to travel to heathen countries, to learn how mournfully the human mind may misrepresent the Deity.

The moral argument against Calvinism, of which we have spoken, must seem irresistible to common and unperverted minds, after attending to the brief statement now given. It will be asked with astonishment, How is it possible that men can hold these doctrines and yet maintain God’s goodness and equity ? What principles can be more contradictory?—To remove the objection to Calvinism, which is drawn from its repugnance to the divine perfections, recourse has been had, as before observed, to the distinction between natural and moral inability, and to other like subtleties. But a more common reply, we conceive, has been drawn from the weakness and imperfection of the human mind, and from its

incapacity of comprehending God. Calvinists will tell us, that because a doctrine opposes our convictions of rectitude, it is not necessarily false ; that apparent are not always real inconsistencies ; that God is an infinite and incomprehensible being, and not to be tried by *our* ideas of fitness and morality ; that we bring their system to an incompetent tribunal, when we submit it to the decision of **human** reason and conscience ; that we are weak judges of what is right and wrong, good and evil in the Deity ; that the happiness of the universe may require an administration of human affairs which is very offensive to limited understandings ; that we must follow revelation, not reason or moral feeling, and must consider doctrines which shock us in revelation, as awful mysteries, which are dark through our ignorance, and which time will enlighten. How little, it is added, can man explain or understand God's ways. How inconsistent the miseries of life appear with goodness in the Creator. How prone too have men always been to confound good and evil, to call the just, unjust. How presumptuous is it in such a being, to sit in judgment upon God, and to question the rectitude of the divine administration, because it shocks *his* sense of rectitude. Such we conceive to be a fair statement of the manner in which the Calvinist frequently meets the objection, that his system is at war with God's attributes. Such the reasoning by which the voice of conscience and nature is stifled, and men are reconciled to doctrines, which, if tried by the established principles of morality, would be rejected with horror. On this reasoning we purpose to offer some remarks ; and we shall avail ourselves of the opportunity, to give our views of the confidence which is due to *our rational and moral faculties in religion.*

That God is infinite, and that man often errs, we affirm as strongly as our Calvinistic brethren. We desire to think humbly of ourselves, and reverently of our Creator. In the strong language of scripture, 'We now see through a glass darkly.' 'We cannot by searching find out God unto perfection? Clouds and darkness are round about him. His judgments are a great deep.' God is great and good beyond utterance or thought. We have no disposition to idolize our own powers, or to penetrate the secret counsels of the Deity. But on the other hand, we think it ungrateful to disparage the powers which our Creator has given us, or to question the certainty or importance of the knowledge which he has seen fit to place within our reach. There is an affected humility, we think, as dangerous as pride. We may rate our faculties too meanly, as well as too boastingly. The worst error in religion after all, is that of the skeptic, who records triumphantly the weaknesses and wanderings of the human intellect, and maintains that no trust is due to the decisions of this erring reason. We by no means conceive, that man's greatest danger springs from pride of understanding, though we think as badly of this vice as other christians. The history of the church proves, that men may trust their faculties too little as well as too much, and that the timidity, which shrinks from investigation, has injured the mind, and betrayed the interests of Christianity, as much as an irreverent boldness of thought.

It is an important truth, which, we apprehend, has not been sufficiently developed, that the ultimate reliance of a human being is and must be on his own mind. To confide in God, we must first confide in the faculties, by which He is apprehended, and by which the

proofs of his existence are weighed. A trust in our ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood is implied in every act of belief; for to question this ability would of necessity unsettle all belief. We cannot take a step in reasoning or action without a secret reliance on our own minds. Religion in particular implies, that we have understandings endowed and qualified for the highest employments of intellect. In affirming the existence and perfections of God, we suppose and affirm the existence in ourselves of faculties which correspond to these sublime objects, and which are fitted to discern them. Religion is a conviction and an act of the human soul, so that in denying confidence to the one we subvert the truth and claims of the other. Nothing is gained to piety by degrading human nature, for in the competency of this nature to know and judge of God all piety has its foundation. Our proneness to err instructs us indeed to use our powers with great caution, but not to contemn and neglect them. The occasional abuse of our faculties, be it ever so enormous, does not prove them unsit for their highest end, which is, to form clear and consistent views of God. Because our eyes sometimes fail or deceive us, would a wise man pluck them out, or cover them with a bandage, and choose to walk and work in the dark? or because they cannot distinguish distant objects, can they discern nothing clearly in their proper sphere, and is sight to be pronounced a fallacious guide? Men who, to support a creed, would shake our trust in the calm, deliberate, and distinct decisions of our rational and moral powers, endanger religion more than its open foes, and forge the deadliest weapon for the infidel.

It is true that God is an infinite being, and also true, that his powers and perfections, his purposes and operations, his ends and means, being unlimited, are *incomprehensible*. In other words, they cannot be wholly taken in or embraced by the human mind. In the strong and figurative language of scripture, we ‘know nothing’ of God’s ways ; that is, we know *very few* of them. But this is just as true of the most advanced archangel as of man. In comparison with the vastness of God’s system, the range of the highest created intellect is narrow ; and in this particular, man’s lot does not differ from that of his elder brethren in heaven. We are both confined in our observation and experience to a little spot in the creation. But are an angel’s faculties worthy of no trust, or is his knowledge uncertain, because he learns and reasons from a small part of God’s works ? or are his judgments respecting the Creator to be charged with presumption, because his views do not spread through the whole extent of the universe ? We grant that our understandings cannot stretch beyond a very narrow sphere. But still the lessons, which we learn within this sphere, are just as sure, as if it were indefinitely enlarged. Because much is unexplored, we are not to suspect what we have actually discovered. Knowledge is not the less real, because confined. The man who has never set foot beyond his native village, knows its scenery and inhabitants as undoubtingly, as if he had travelled to the poles. We indeed see very little ; but that little is as true, as if everything else were seen ; and our future discoveries must agree with and support it. Should the whole order and purposes of the universe be opened to us, it is certain that nothing would be disclosed, which would in any degree shake our persuasion, that the earth is in-

habited by rational and moral beings, who are authorised to expect from their Creator the most benevolent and equitable government. No extent of observation can unsettle those primary and fundamental principles of moral truth, which we derive from our highest faculties operating in the relations in which God has fixed us. In every region and period of the universe, it will be as true as it is now on the earth, that knowledge and power are the measures of responsibility, and that natural incapacity absolves from guilt. These and other moral verities, which are among our clearest perceptions, would, if possible, be strengthened, in proportion as our powers should be enlarged; because harmony and consistency are the characters of God's administration, and all our researches into the universe only serve to manifest its unity, and to show a wider operation of the laws which we witness and experience on earth.

We grant that God is *incomprehensible*, in the sense already given. But he is not therefore *unintelligible*; and this distinction we conceive to be important. We do not pretend to know the *whole* nature and properties of God, but still we can form some *clear ideas* of him, and can reason from these ideas as justly as from any other. The truth is, that we cannot be said to comprehend any being whatever, not the simplest plant or animal. All have hidden properties. Our knowledge of all is limited. But have we therefore no distinct ideas of the objects around us, and is all our reasoning about them unworthy of trust? Because God is infinite, his name is not therefore a mere sound. It is a representative of some distinct conceptions of our Creator; and these conceptions are as sure, and important, and as proper materials for the reasoning faculty, as they would be if our views were indefinitely enlarg-

ed. We cannot indeed trace God's goodness and rectitude through the whole field of his operations ; but we know the essential nature of these attributes, and therefore can often judge what accords with and opposes them. God's goodness, because infinite, does not cease to be goodness, or essentially differ from the same attribute in man ; nor does justice change its nature, so that it cannot be understood, because it is seated in an unbounded mind. There have indeed been philosophers, ' falsely so called,' who have argued from the unlimited nature of God, that we cannot ascribe to him justice and other moral attributes, in any proper or definite sense of those words ; and the inference is plain, that all religion or worship, wanting an intelligible object, must be a misplaced, wasted offering. This doctrine from the infidel we reject with abhorrence ; but something, not very different, too often reaches us from the mistaken christian ; who, to save his creed, shrouds the Creator in utter darkness. In opposition to both, we maintain that God's attributes are intelligible, and that we can conceive as truly of his goodness and justice, as of these qualities in men. In fact, these qualities are essentially the same in God and man, though differing in degree, in purity, and in extent of operation. We know not and we cannot conceive of any other justice or goodness, than we learn from our own nature ; and if God have not these, he is altogether unknown to us as a moral being ; he offers nothing for esteem and love to rest upon ; the objection of the infidel is just, that worship is wasted ; ' We worship we know not what.'

It is asked, on what authority we ascribe to God goodness and rectitude, in the sense in which these attributes belong to men, or how we can judge of the nature of attributes in the mind of the Creator ? We

answer by asking, How it is that we become acquainted with the mind of a fellow creature? The last is as invisible, as removed from *immediate inspection*, as the first. Still we do not hesitate to speak of the justice and goodness of a neighbour; and how do we gain our knowledge? We answer, by witnessing the effects, operations, and expressions of these attributes. It is a law of our nature to argue from the effect to the cause, from the action to the agent, from the ends proposed and from the means of pursuing them, to the character and disposition of the being in whom we observe them. By these processes, we learn the invisible mind and character of man; and by the same we ascend to the mind of God, whose works, effects, operations, and ends, are as expressive and significant of justice and goodness, as the best and most decisive actions of men. If this reasoning be sound, (and all religion rests upon it,) then God's justice and goodness are intelligible attributes, agreeing essentially with the same qualities in ourselves. Their operation indeed is infinitely wider, and they are employed in accomplishing not only immediate but remote and unknown ends. Of consequence, we must expect that many parts of the divine administration will be *obscure*, that is, will not produce *immediate* good, and an *immediate* distinction between virtue and vice. But still the unbounded operation of these attributes does not change their nature. They are still the same, as if they acted in the narrowest sphere. We can still determine in many cases what does not accord with them. We are particularly sure that those essential principles of justice, which enter into and even form our conception of this attribute, must pervade every province and every period of the administration of a just being, and that to suppose the Creator in any

instance to forsake them, is to charge him directly with unrighteousness, however loudly the lips may compliment his equity.

'But is it not presumptuous in man,' it is continually said, 'to sit in judgment on God?' We answer, that to 'sit in judgment on God' is an ambiguous and impudent phrase, conveying to common minds the ideas of irreverence, boldness, familiarity. The question would be better stated thus;—Is it not presumptuous in man to judge concerning God; and concerning what agrees or disagrees with his attributes? We answer confidently, No; for in many cases we are competent and even bound to judge. And we plead first in our defence the scriptures. How continually does God in his word appeal to the understanding and moral judgment of man. 'O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it.' We observe in the next place, that all religion supposes and is built on judgments passed by us on God and on his operations. Is it not, for example, our duty and a leading part of piety to *praise* God? And what is praising a being, but to adjudge and ascribe to him just and generous deeds and motives? And of what value is praise, except from those, who are capable of distinguishing between actions which exalt, and actions which degrade the character? Is it presumption to call God *excellent*? And what is this, but to refer his character to a standard of excellence, to try it by the established principles of rectitude, and to pronounce its conformity to them; that is, to judge of God and his operations?

We are presumptuous, we are told, in judging of our Creator. But he himself has made this our duty, in

giving us a moral faculty ; and to decline it, is to violate the primary law of our nature. Conscience, the sense of right, the power of perceiving moral distinctions, the power of discerning between justice and injustice, excellence and baseness, is the highest faculty given by God, the whole foundation of our responsibility, our sole capacity for religion. Now we are forbidden by this faculty to love a being, who wants, or who fails to discover, moral excellence. God, in giving us conscience, has implanted a principle within us, which forbids us to prostrate ourselves before mere power, or to offer praise where we do not discover worth, a principle, which challenges our supreme homage for supreme goodness, and which absolves us from guilt, when we abhor a severe and unjust administration. Our Creator has consequently waived his own claims on our veneration and obedience, any farther than he discovers himself to us in characters of benevolence, equity, and righteousness. He rests his authority on the perfect coincidence of his will and government with those great and fundamental principles of morality written on our souls. He desires no worship, but that which springs from the exercise of our moral faculties upon his character, from our discernment and persuasion of his rectitude and goodness. He asks, he accepts, no love or admiration but from those, who can understand the nature and the proofs of moral excellence.

There are two or three striking facts, which show that there is no presumption in judging of God, and of what agrees or disagrees with his attributes. The first fact is, that the most intelligent and devout men have often employed themselves in proving the existence and perfections of God, and have been honored for this service to the cause of religion. Now we ask, what is

meant by the *proofs* of a divine perfection? They are certain acts, operations, and methods of government, which are proper and natural effects, signs, and expressions of this perfection, and from which, according to the established principles of reasoning, it may be inferred. To prove the divine attributes is to collect and arrange those works and ways of the Creator, which accord with these attributes, correspond to them, flow from them, and express them. Of consequence, to prove them requires and implies *the power of judging of what agrees with them*, of discerning their proper marks and expressions. All our treatises on natural theology rest on this power. Every argument in support of a divine perfection is an exercise of it. To deny it is to overthrow all religion.

Now if such are the proofs of God's goodness and justice, and if we are capable of discerning them, then we are not necessarily presumptuous, when we say of particular measures ascribed to him, that they are inconsistent with his attributes, and cannot belong to him. There is plainly no more presumption in affirming of certain principles of administration, that they oppose God's equity and would prove him unrighteous, than to affirm of others, that they prove him upright and good. There are signs and evidences of injustice as unequivocal as those of justice; and our faculties are as adequate to the perception of the last as of the first. If they must not be trusted in deciding what would prove God unjust, they are unworthy of confidence when they gather evidences of his rectitude; and of course, the whole structure of religion must fall.

It is no slight objection to the mode of reasoning adopted by the Calvinist, that it renders the proof of the divine attributes impossible. When we object to his

representations of the divine government, that they shock our clearest ideas of goodness and justice, he replies, that still they may be true, because we know very little of God, and what seems unjust to man, may be in the Creator the perfection of rectitude. Now this weapon has a double edge. If the strongest marks and expressions of injustice do not prove God unjust, then the strongest marks of the opposite character do not prove him righteous. If the first do not deserve confidence, because of our narrow views of God, neither do the last. If, when more shall be known, the first may be found consistent with perfect rectitude; so, when more shall be known, the last may be found consistent with infinite malignity and oppression. This reasoning of our opponents casts us on an ocean of awful uncertainty. Admit it, and we have no proofs of God's goodness and equity to rely upon. What we call proof may be mere appearances, which a wider knowledge of God may reverse. The future may show us, that the very laws and works of the Creator, from which we now infer his kindness, are consistent with the most determined purpose to spread infinite misery and guilt, and were intended, by raising hope, to add the agony of disappointment to our other woes. Who may not these anticipations, horrible as they are, be verified by the unfolding of God's system, if our reasonings about his attributes are rendered so very uncertain as Calvinism teaches, by the infinity of his nature?

We have mentioned one fact to show that it is no presumptuous to judge of God, and of what accord with and opposes his attributes; namely, that the his attributes are thought susceptible of proof. Another fact, very decisive on this point, is, that Christian of all classes have concurred in testing the truth o

Christianity in a great degree on its *internal* evidence, that is, on its accordance with the perfections of God. How common is it to hear from religious teachers, that Christianity is worthy of a good and righteous being, that it bears the marks of a divine original. Volumes have been written on its internal proofs, on the coincidence of its purposes and spirit with our highest conceptions of God. How common too is it, to say of other religions, that they are at war with the divine nature, with God's rectitude and goodness, and that we want no other proofs of their falsehood. And what does all this reasoning imply? Clearly this, that we are capable of determining, in many cases, what is worthy and what is unworthy of God, what accords with and what opposes his moral attributes. Deny us this capacity, and it would be no presumption against a professed revelation, that it ascribed to the Supreme Being the most detestable practices. It might still be said in support of such a system, that it is arrogant in man to determine what kind of revelation suits the character of the Creator. Christianity then leans, at least in part, and some think chiefly, on internal evidence, or on its agreeableness to God's moral attributes; and is it probable, that this religion, having this foundation, contains representations of God's government which shock our ideas of rectitude, and that it silences our objections by telling us, that we are no judges of what suits or opposes his infinite nature?

We will name one more fact to show, that it is not presumptuous to form these judgments of the Creator. All Christians are accustomed to reason from God's attributes, and to use them as tests of doctrines. In their controversies with one another, they spare no pains to show, that such particular views accord best with the

divine perfections, and every sect labors to throw on its adversaries the odium of maintaining what is unworthy of God.. Theological writings are filled with such arguments ; and yet we, it seems, are guilty of awful presumption, when we deny of God principles of administration, against which every pure and good sentiment in our breasts rises in abhorrence.

We shall conclude this discussion with an important inquiry. If God's justice and goodness are consistent with those operations and modes of government, which Calvinism ascribes to him, of what use is our belief in these perfections ? What expectations can we found upon them ? If it consist with divine rectitude to consign to everlasting misery, beings who have come guilty and impotent from his hand, we beg to know what interest we have in this rectitude, what pledge of good it contains, or what evil can be imagined which may not be its natural result ? If justice and goodness, when stretched to infinity, take such strange forms and appear in such unexpected and apparently inconsistent operations, how are we sure, that they will not give up the best men to ruin, and leave the universe to the powers of darkness ? Such results indeed seem incompatible with these attributes, but not more so than the acts attributed to God by Calvinism. Is it said, that the divine faithfulness is pledged in the scriptures to a happier issue of things ? But why should not divine faithfulness transcend our poor understandings as much as divine goodness and justice, and why may not God, consistently with this attribute, crush every hope which his word has raised ? Thus all the divine perfections are lost to us as grounds of encouragement and consolation, if we maintain that their infinite place is them before our judgment, and that we must expect from them

measures and operations entirely opposed to what seems to us most accordant with their nature.

We have thus endeavoured to show that the testimony of our rational and moral faculties against Calvinism, is worthy of trust.—We know that this reasoning will be met by the question, What then becomes of Christianity? for this religion plainly teaches the doctrines you have condemned. Our answer is ready. Christianity contains no such doctrines. Christianity, reason, and conscience are perfectly harmonious on the subject under discussion. Our religion, fairly construed, gives no countenance to that system, which has arrogated to itself the distinction of Evangelical. We cannot, however, enter this field at present. We will only say that the general spirit of Christianity affords a very strong presumption, that its records teach no such doctrines as we have opposed. This spirit is love, charity, benevolence. Christianity, we all agree, is designed to manifest God as perfect benevolence, and to bring men to love and imitate him. Now is it probable, that a religion having this object, gives views of the Supreme Being, from which our moral convictions, and benevolent sentiments shrink with horror, and which if made our pattern, would convert us into monsters! It is plain that were a human parent to form himself on the universal Father, as described by Calvinism, that is, were he to bring his children into life totally depraved, and then to pursue them with endless punishment, we should charge him with a cruelty not surpassed in the annals of the world; or were a sovereign to incapacitate his subjects in any way whatever for obeying him, and then to torture them in dungeons without end, we should say, that history records no such instance. And is it probable, that a reli-

gion, which aims to attract and assimilate ~~us~~ to God, considered as love, should hold him up to us in these heart-withering characters? We may confidently expect to find in such a system the brightest views of the divine nature; and the same objections lie against interpretations of its records, which savor of cruelty and injustice, as lie against the literal sense of passages which ascribe to God bodily wants and organs. Let the scriptures be read with a recollection of the spirit of Christianity, and with that modification of particular texts by this general spirit, which a just criticism requires, and Calvinism would no more enter the mind of the reader, than Popery we had almost said, than Heathenism.

In the remarks now made, it will be seen, we hope, that we have aimed to expose doctrines, not to condemn their professors. It is true, that men are apt to think themselves assailed, when their system only is called to account. But we have no foe but error. We are less and less disposed to measure the piety of others by peculiarities of faith. Men's characters are determined, not by the opinions which they profess, but by those on which their thoughts habitually fasten, which recur to them most forcibly, and which color their ordinary views of God and duty. The greed of habit, imitation, or fear, may be defended stoutly, and yet have little practical influence. The mind, when compelled by education or other circumstances to receive irrational doctrines, has yet a power of keeping them, as it were, on its surface, of excluding them from its depths, of refusing to incorporate them with its own being; and when burdened with a philosophy incongruous system, it often discovers a sagacity which reminds us of the instinct of inferior animals in detecting the

healthful and nutritious portions, and in making them its daily food. Accordingly the real faith often corresponds little with that which is professed. It often happens, that through the progress of the mind in light and virtue, opinions, once central, are gradually thrown outward, lose their vitality, and cease to be principles of action, whilst through habit they are defended as articles of faith. The words of the creed survive, but its advocates sympathize with it little more than its foes. These remarks are particularly applicable to the present subject. A large number, perhaps a majority of those, who surname themselves with the name of Calvin, have little more title to it than ourselves. They keep the name, and drop the principles which it signifies. They adhere to the system as a whole, but shrink from all its parts and distinguishing points. This silent but real defection from Calvinism is spreading more and more widely. The grim features of this system are softening, and its stern spirit yielding to conciliation and charity. We beg our readers to consult for themselves the two Catechisms and the Confession of the Westminster Assembly, and to compare these standards of Calvinism, with what now bears its name. They will rejoice, we doubt not in the triumphs of truth. With these views, we have no disposition to disparage the professors of the system which we condemn, although we believe that its influence is yet so extensive and pernicious as to bind us to oppose it.

Calvinism, we are persuaded, is giving place to better views. It has passed its meridian, and is sinking, to rise no more. It has to contend with foes more formidable than thearians, with foes, from whom it cannot shrink, and metaphysical subtleties.

We mean with the progress of the human mind, and with the progress of the spirit of the gospel. Society is going forward in intelligence and charity, and of course is leaving the theology of the sixteenth century behind it. We hail this revolution of opinion as a most auspicious event to the Christian cause. We hear much at present of efforts to spread the gospel. But Christianity is gaining more by the removal of degrading errors, than it would by armies of missionaries who should carry with them a corrupted form of the religion. We think the decline of Calvinism one of the most encouraging facts in our passing history; for this system, by outraging conscience and reason, tends to array these high faculties against revelation. Its errors are peculiarly mournful, because they relate to the character of God. It darkens and stains his pure nature; spoils his character of its sacredness, loveliness, glory; and thus quenches the central light of the universe, makes existence a curse, and the extinction of it a consummation devoutly to be wished. We now speak of the *peculiarities* of this system, and of their natural influence, when not counteracted, as they always are in a greater or less degree, by better views, derived from the spirit and plain lessons of Christianity.

We have had so much to do with our subject, that we have neglected to make the usual extracts from the book which we proposed to review. We earnestly wish, that a work, answering to the title of this, which should give us 'a general view of Christian doctrines,' might be undertaken by a powerful hand. Next to a good commentary on the scriptures, it would be the best service which could be rendered to Christian truth.

DISCOURSE

AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. JOHN EMERY ABBOT.
SALEM, 1815.

COLOSSIANS I. 28.

WHOM WE PREACH, WARNING EVERY MAN, AND TEACHING EVERY MAN IN ALL WISDOM, THAT WE MAY PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS.

IN the verses immediately preceding the text, we find the apostle enlarging with his usual zeal and earnestness, on a subject peculiarly dear to him; on the glorious *mystery* of God, or in other words, on the great purpose of God, which had been kept *secret* from ages, to make the Gentile world partakers, through faith, of the blessings of the long promised Messiah. ‘Christ the hope of glory to the Gentiles,’ was the theme, on which Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, delighted to expatiate. Having spoken of Jesus in this character, he immediately adds, ‘Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.’

On the present occasion, which invites us to consider the design and duties of the christian ministry, I have thought that these words would guide us to many appropriate and useful reflections. They teach us what the apostle preached; ‘We preach Christ.’ They teach us the end or object for which he then preached; ‘That

we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' Following this natural order, I shall first consider what is intended by 'preaching Christ.' I shall then endeavour to illustrate and recommend the end or object for which Christ is to be preached; and I shall conclude with some remarks on the methods by which this end is to be accomplished. In discussing these topics, on which a variety of sentiment is known to exist, I shall necessarily dissent from some of the views which are cherished by particular classes of Christians. But the frank expression of opinion ought not to be construed into any want of affection or esteem for those from whom I differ.

I. What are we to understand by 'preaching Christ?' This subject is the more interesting and important, because, I fear, it has often been misunderstood. Many persons imagine, that Christ is never preached, unless his name is continually repeated and his character continually kept in view. This is an error, and should be exposed. Preaching Christ, then, does not consist in making Christ perpetually the subject of discourse, but in inculcating on his authority *the religion which he taught*. Jesus came to be the light and teacher of the world; and in this sublime and benevolent character he unfolded many truths relating to the Universal Father, to his own character, to the condition, duties, and prospects of mankind, to the perfection and true happiness of the human soul, to a future state of retribution, to the terms of forgiveness, to the means of virtue, and of everlasting life. Now whenever we teach, on the authority of Jesus, any doctrine or precept included in this extensive system, we 'preach Christ.' When for instance we inculcate on his authority the duties of forgiving enemies, of loving ourselves, of hungering

after righteousness, we ‘preach Christ’ as truly as when we describe his passion on the cross, or the purpose and the importance of his sufferings.

By the word 'Christ' in the text and in many other places, we are to understand his religion rather than his person. Among the Jews nothing was more common than to give the name of a religious teacher to the system of truth which he taught. We see this continually exemplified in the New Testament. Thus it is said of the Jews, 'They have Moses and the prophets.' What is meant by this? that they had Moses residing in person among them? Certainly not; but that they had his law, his religion. Jesus says, 'I came not to destroy the prophets.' What did he mean? that he had not come to slay or destroy the prophets who had died ages before his birth? Certainly not; he only intended that his doctrines were suited to confirm, not to invalidate, the writings of these holy men. According to the same form of speech Stephen was accused of blasphemy against Moses, because some of his remarks were construed into a reproach on the law of Moses. These passages are sufficient to show us that a religion was often called by the name of its teacher; and conformably to this usage, when Paul says, 'We preach Christ,' we ought to understand him as affirming, that he preached the whole system of doctrines and duties which Christ taught, whether they related to Jesus himself, or to any other subject.

But there is one passage more decisive on this point than any which I have adduced. In the Acts of the Apostles, ¹⁷ Paul says, "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." Here we find the apostle

declaring that in every city there were *men who preached Moses*; and we are told in what this preaching consisted; ‘Moses is *read* in the synagogue every sabbath day.’ No one, acquainted with the ancient services of the synagogue, can suppose, for a moment, that the character and offices of Moses were the themes of the Jewish teachers every sabbath, and that they preached nothing else. It was their custom to read the books of the law in course, and to offer comments upon obscure or important passages. In many parts of these books the name of Moses is not mentioned. We have whole chapters about the tabernacle, and about the rites of cleansing from the leprosy. But according to James, when these portions were read and explained, Moses was preached; not because his character was the subject, but because the instructions contained in these chapters were a part of the religion which he was appointed to communicate to the children of Israel. The name of the teacher was given to his doctrine. This form of speech was not peculiar to the Jews; all nations have probably adopted it. At the present day, nothing is more common than to hear, that Locke, or Newton, or some other distinguished philosopher, is published, or taught; not that his personal character and history are made public, but his system of doctrines. In the same way Christ is preached, published, proclaimed, while his instructions are delivered, although these instructions may relate to other topics beside his own offices and character.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood in the remarks which I have now made. ‘Do not imagine that I will exclude from the pulpit discourses on the excellencies of Jesus Christ. The truths which relate to Jesus himself are among the most important which the gospel reveals.

The relations which Jesus Christ sustains to the world are so important and so tender ; the concern which he has expressed in human salvation so strong and disinterested ; the blessings of pardon and immortal life which he brings, so undeserved and unbounded ; his character is such a union of moral beauty and grandeur ; his example is at once so pure and so persuasive ; the events of his life, his miracles, his sufferings, his resurrection and ascension, and his offices of intercessor and judge are so strengthening to faith, hope, and charity, that his ministers should dwell on his name with affectionate veneration, and should delight to exhibit him to the gratitude, love, imitation, and confidence of mankind.

But whilst the christian minister is often to insist on the life, the character, the offices, and the benefits of Jesus Christ, let him not imagine that he is preaching Christ, only when these are his themes. If he confine himself to these, he will not in the full sense of the word preach Christ ; for this is to preach the whole religion of Jesus ; and this religion is of vast extent. It regards man in his diversified and ever multiplying relations to his Creator and to his fellow creatures, to the present state and to all future ages. Its aim is, to instruct and quicken us to cultivate an enlarged virtue ; to cultivate our whole intellectual and moral nature. It collects and offers motives to piety from the past and from the future, from heaven and hell, from nature and experience, from human example, and from the imitable excellencies of God, from the world without and the world within us. The gospel of Christ is indeed an inexhaustible treasury of moral and religious truth. Jesus, the first and best of evangelical teachers, did not confine himself to a few topics, but manifested himself to be the wisdom of God by the richness and variety

of his instructions. To preach Christ is to unfold, as far as our feeble and narrow powers permit, all the doctrines, duties, and motives, which are recorded in the gospels and in the writings of his inspired apostles.

It is not intended by these remarks that all the instructions of Christ are of equal importance, and that all are to be urged with equal frequency and zeal. Some undoubtedly are of greater moment and of more universal application than others. But a minister of a sound and candid mind, will be very cautious lest he assign so high a rank to a few doctrines, that the rest will sink into comparative insignificance, and almost fade from the minds of his hearers. He will labor to give enlarged and harmonious views of all the principles of Christianity, recollecting that each receives support from the rest, and that no doctrine or precept will exert its proper influence, if swelled into disproportioned importance, or detached from the truths which ought to modify and restrain it.

It has been the object of these remarks to show, that preaching Christ does not imply that the offices and character of Christ are to be made perpetually the subjects of discourse. Where this idea prevails, it too often happens that the religion of Jesus is very partially preached. A few topics are repeated without end. Many delightful and ennobling views of Christianity are seldom or never exhibited. The duties of the gospel receive but a cursory attention. Religion is thought to consist in a fervid state of mind, produced by the constant contemplation of a few affecting ideas; whilst the only acceptable religion, which consists in living soberly, righteously and godly in the world, seems to be undervalued as quite an inferior attainment. — Where this mistake prevails, we too often discover a censorious

spirit among hearers, who pronounce with confidence on this and another minister, that they do not preach Christ, because their discourses do not turn on a few topics in relation to the Saviour, which are thought to contain the whole of Christianity. Very often the labours of a pious and upright minister are defeated by this prejudice; nor must he wonder, if he find himself described, as an enemy to the faith, by those, whose want of education or capacity confines them to the narrowest views of the christian system.—May I be permitted with deference and respect, to beseech christian ministers not to encourage by example this spirit of censure among private Christians. There is no lesson which we can teach our hearers more easily, than to think contemptuously and to speak bitterly of other classes of Christians, and especially of their teachers. Let us never forget, that we none of us preach Christ in the full import of that phrase. None of us can hope that we give a complete representation of the religion of our Master; that we exhibit every doctrine without defect or without excess, in its due proportions, and in its just connexions. We of necessity communicate a portion of our own weakness and darkness to the religion which we dispense.. The degree of imperfection indeed differs in different teachers; but none are free from the universal frailty, and none are authorised to take the seat of judgment, and, on the ground of imagined errors, to deny to others, whose lives are as spotless as their own, a conscientious purpose to learn and to teach the whole counsel of God.

Having thus considered what is intended by preaching Christ, I proceed to consider, secondly, for what Christ is to be preached. We preach Christ, says the apostle, warning every man, and teaching

every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus ;' that is, perfect in the religion of Christ, or a perfect Christian. From this passage we derive a most important sentiment, confirmed by the whole New Testament, that the great design of all the doctrines and precepts of the gospel; is, to exalt the character, to promote eminent purity of heart and life, to make men perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect. For what end then is Christianity to be preached ? The answer is plain. We must preach, not to make fiery partisans, and to swell the number of a sect ; not to overwhelm the mind with fear, or to heat it with feverish rapture ; not to form men to the decencies of life, to a superficial goodness, which will secure the admiration of mankind. All these effects fall infinitely short of the great end of the christian ministry. We should preach, that we may make men perfect Christians ; perfect, not according to the standard of the world, but according to the law of Christ ; perfect in heart and in life, in solitude and in society, in the great and in the common concerns of life. Here is the purpose of christian preaching. In this, as in a common centre, all the truths of the gospel meet ; to this they all conspire ; and no doctrine has an influence on salvation, any farther than it is an aid and excitement to the perfecting of our nature.

The christian minister needs often to be reminded of this great end of his office, the perfection of the human character. He is too apt to rest in low attainments himself, and to be satisfied with low attainments in others. He ought never to forget the great distinction and glory of the gospel, that it is designed to perfect human nature. All the precepts of this divine system are marked by a sublime character. No demands that our piety be fervent, our benevolence unbounded, and our

thirst for righteousness strong and insatiable. It enjoins a virtue which does not stop at what is positively prescribed, but which is prodigal of service to God and to mankind. The gospel enjoins inflexible integrity, fearless sincerity, fortitude which despises pain and tramples pleasure under foot in the pursuit of duty, and an independence of spirit which no scorn can deter and no example seduce from asserting truth and adhering to the cause which conscience approves. With this spirit of martyrs, this hardness and intrepidity of soldiers of the cross, the gospel calls us to unite the mildest and meekest virtues; a sympathy which melts over others' woes; a disinterestedness which finds pleasure in toils and labors for others' good; a humility which loves to bless unseen, and forgets itself in the performance of the noblest deeds. To this perfection of social duty, the gospel commands us to join a piety which refers every event to the providence of God; and every action to his will; a love which counts no service hard, and a penitence which esteems no judgment severe; a gratitude which offers praise even in adversity; a holy trust unbroken by protracted suffering, and a hope triumphant over death. In one word, it enjoins, that, loving and confiding in Jesus Christ, we make his spotless character, his heavenly life, the model of our own. Such is the sublimity of character which the gospel demands, and such the end to which our preaching should ever be directed.

I have dwelt on this end of preaching, because it is too often forgotten, and because a stronger conviction of it will give new force and elevation to our instructions. We need to feel more deeply, that we are entrusted with a religion which is designed to ennoble human nature, which recognises in man the capacities

of all that is good, great and excellent; and which offers every encouragement and aid to the pursuit of perfection. The christian minister should often recollect, that man, though propense to evil, has yet powers and faculties which may be exalted and refined to angelic glory; that he is called by the gospel to prepare for the community of angels; that he is formed for unlimited progress in intellectual and moral excellence and felicity. He should often recollect, that in Jesus Christ our nature has been intimately united with the divine, and that in Jesus it is already enthroned in heaven. Familiarized to these generous conceptions, the christian preacher, whilst he faithfully unfolds to men their guilt and danger, should also unfold their capacities of greatness; should reveal the splendor of that destiny to which they are called by Christ; should labor to awaken within them aspirations after a nobler character and a higher existence, and to inflame them with the love of all the graces and virtues with which Jesus came to enrich and adorn the human soul. In this he will prove that he understands the true and great design of the gospel and the ministry, which is nothing less than the perfection of the human character.

May I be permitted to say, that perhaps one of the greatest defects in our preaching, is, that it is not sufficiently directed to ennable and elevate the minds of men. It does not breathe a sufficiently generous spirit. It appeals too constantly to the lowest principle of human nature; I mean the principle of fear, which under judicious excitement is indeed of great and undoubted use, but which, as every parent knows, when habitually awakened, is always found to deluge the mind, to break the spirit, to give tameness to the character, and to chill the best affections. Perhaps, the cause of the

limited influence of Christianity, is, that, as it is too often exhibited, it seems adapted to form an abject, servile character, rather than to raise its disciples to true greatness and dignity. Perhaps, were Christianity more habitually regarded as a system, whose great design it is to infuse honorable sentiments, magnanimity, energy, an ingenuous love of God, a superiority to the senses, a spirit of self-sacrifice, a virtue akin to that of heaven, its reception would be more cordial, and its influence more extensive, more happy, more accordant with its great end, the perfection of human nature.

III. Having thus considered the end of Christian preaching, I now come to offer, in the third place, a few remarks on the best method of accomplishing it; and here I find myself obliged to omit a great variety of topics, and can only offer one or two of principal importance. That the gospel may attain its end, may exert the most powerful and ennobling influence on the human character, it must be addressed at once to the understanding and to the heart. It must be so preached as to be firmly believed and deeply felt.—To secure to Christianity this firm belief, I have only time to observe, that it should be preached in a *rational* manner. By this I mean, that a christian minister should beware of offering interpretations of scripture, which are repugnant to any clear discoveries of reason or dictates of conscience. This admonition is founded upon the very obvious principle, that a revelation from God must be adapted to the rational and moral nature which he has conferred on man; that God can never contradict in his word what he has himself written on the human heart, or teaches in his works and providence. Every man who reads the bible knows, that like other books, it has many passages which admit a variety of interpreta-

tions. Human language does not admit entire precision. It has often been observed by philosophers, that the most familiar sentences owe their perspicuity, not so much to the definiteness of the language, as to an almost incredible activity of the mind, which selects from a variety of meanings that which each word demands, and assigns such limits to every phrase as the intention of the speaker, his character and situation, require. In addition to this source of obscurity to which all writings are exposed, we must remember that the scriptures were written in a distant age, in a foreign language, by men who were unaccustomed to the systematic arrangements of modern times, and who, although inspired, were left to communicate their thoughts in the style most natural or habitual. Can we wonder then that they admit a variety of interpretations? Now we owe it to a book, which records, as we believe, revelations from Heaven, and which is plainly designed for the moral improvement of the race, to favor those explications of obscure passages, which are seen to harmonize with the moral attributes of God, and with the acknowledged teachings of nature and conscience. All those interpretations of the gospel, which strike the mind at once as inconsistent with a righteous government of the universe, which require of man what is disproportioned to his nature, or which shock any clear conviction which our experience has furnished, cannot be viewed with too jealous an eye by him, who, revering Christianity, desires to secure to it an intelligent belief.

It is in vain to say that the first and most obvious meaning of scripture is always to be followed, no matter where it leads. I answer, that the first and most obvious meaning of a passage written in a foreign

language, and in remote antiquity, is very often false, and such as farther inquiry compels us to abandon. I answer too, that all sects of Christians agree, and are forced to agree, in frequently forsaking the literal sense, on account of its incongruity with acknowledged truth. There is in fact no book in the world, which requires us more frequently to restrain unlimited expressions, to qualify the letter by the spirit, and to seek the meaning in the state and customs of the writer and of his age, than the New Testament. No book is written in a more popular, figurative, and animated style, the very style which requires the most constant exercise of judgment in the reader. The scriptures are not a frigid digest of Christianity, as if this religion were a mere code of civil laws. They give us the gospel warm from the hearts of its preachers. The language is not that of logicians, not the language of retired and inanimate speculation, but of affection, of zeal, of men who burned to convey deep and vivid impressions of the truth. In understanding such writers, moral feeling is often a better guide than a servile adherence to the literal and most obvious meaning of every word and phrase. It may be said of the New as well as the Old Testament, that sometimes the letter killeth whilst the spirit giveth life. Almost any system may be built on the New Testament by a commentator, who, forgetting the general scope of Christianity and the lessons of nature and experience, shall impose on every passage the literal signification which is first offered to the mind. The christian minister should avail himself, in his exposition of the divine word, of the aids of learning and criticism, and also of the aid of reason and conscience. Those interpretations of difficult passages, which approve themselves to his clear and established conceptions of

rectitude and to his devout and benevolent affections, he should regard with a favorable eye ; whilst those of an opposite character should be regarded with great distrust.

I have said, that this rational method of preaching Christianity is important, if we would secure a firm belief to Christianity. Some men may indeed be reconciled to an unreasonable religion ; and terror, that passion which more than any other unsettles the intellect, may silence every objection to the most contradictory and degrading principles. But in general the understanding and conscience cannot be entirely subdued. They resist the violence which is done them. A lurking incredulitymingles with the attempt to believe what contradicts the highest principles of our nature. Particularly the most intelligent part of the community, who will ultimately govern public sentiment, will doubt and disbelieve the unreasonable system, which perhaps they find it prudent to acknowledge ; and will either convert it into an instrument of policy, or seize a favorable moment for casting off its restraints and levelling its institutions with the dust. Thus important is it that Christianity should be recommended to the understandings of men.

But this is not enough. It is also most important that the gospel should be recommended to the heart. Christianity should be so preached, as to interest the affections, to awaken contrition and fear, veneration and love, gratitude and hope. Some preachers, from observing the pernicious effects of violent and exclusive appeals to the passions, have fallen into an opposite error which has rendered the labors of their lives almost wholly unfruitful. They have addressed men as mere creatures of intellect ; they have forgotten, that affec-

tion is as essential to our nature as thought, that action requires motive, that the union of reason and sensibility is the health of the soul, and that without moral feeling there can be no strength of moral purpose. They have preached ingeniously, and the hearer has pronounced the teaching true. But the truth, coldly imparted, and coldly received, has been forgotten as fast as heard ; no energy of will has been awakened ; no resistance to habit and passion been called forth ; perhaps not a momentary purpose of self-improvement has glanced through the mind. Preaching, to be effectual, must be as various as our nature. The sun warms, at the same moment that it enlightens ; and unless religious truth be addressed at once to the reason and the affections, unless it kindles whilst it guides, it is a useless splendor ; it leaves the heart barren ; it produces no fruits of godliness. Let the christian minister then preach the gospel with earnestness, with affection, with a heart warmed by his subject, not thinking of himself, not seeking applause, but solicitous for the happiness of mankind, tenderly concerned for his people, awake to the solemnities of eternity, and deeply impressed with the worth of the human soul, with the glory and happiness to which it may be exalted, and with the misery and ruin into which it will be plunged by irreligion and vice. Let him preach, not to amuse but to convince and awaken, not to excite a momentary interest but a deep and lasting seriousness ; not to make his hearers think of the preacher, but of themselves, of their own characters and future condition. Let him labor, by delineating with unaffected ardor the happiness of virtue, by setting forth religion in its most attractive forms, by displaying the paternal character of God, and the love of Christ which was stronger than death, by unfolding

the purity and blessedness of the heavenly world, by revealing to the soul its own greatness, and by persuasion, by entreaty, by appeals to the best sentiments of human nature, by speaking from a heart convinced of immortality ; let him labor, by these methods, to touch and to soften his hearers, to draw them to God and duty, to awaken gratitude and love, a sublime hope and a generous desire of exalted goodness. And let him also labor, by solemn warning, by teaching men their responsibility, by setting before sinners the aggravations of their guilt, by showing them the ruin and immediate wretchedness wrought by moral evil in the soul, and by pointing them to approaching death, and the retributions of the future world ; let him labor, by these means, to reach the consciences of those whom higher motives will not quicken, to break the slumbers of the worldly, to cut off every false hope, and to persuade the sinner by a salutary terror to return to God, and to seek with a new earnestness, virtue, glory, and eternal life.

NOTE

on the First Head of the preceding Discourse.

* THE error, which I have opposed on the subject of preaching Christ,* may be traced in a great measure to what appears to me a wrong interpretation of the two first chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. In these chapters, Paul says, that he 'determined to know nothing among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ and him crucified,' and speaks once and again of 'preaching Christ crucified,' &c. It has been supposed, that the

apostle here intended to select the particular point on which preaching should chiefly turn, and that we have his authority for censuring a discourse which does not relate immediately to the character of Christ, and especially to his sufferings on the cross. But I think that a little attention to the circumstances of the apostle and of the **Corinthians** will show us, that Paul referred to the religion of Jesus generally, as the subject of his preaching, and not to a very limited part of it.

Corinth, being the most commercial city of Greece, was inhabited by Jews as well as Greeks. These Jews, as Paul tells us, ‘wanted a sign,’ just as the Pharisees in the time of Christ demanded ‘a sign from heaven.’ That is, they wanted a Messiah who should be marked out to them by a visible descent from heaven, or by some glorious appearance from heaven, or by some outward majesty which should be a pledge of his breaking the Roman yoke, and raising Judea to the empire of the world. They wanted a splendid and temporal Messiah. The Greeks on the other hand, who were a speculative people, wanted *wisdom*, or a system of philosophy, and could hear nothing patiently but the subtle disputation and studied harangues with which they were amused by those who pretended to wisdom. Such was the state of Corinth, when Paul entered it. Had he brought with him an account of a triumphant Messiah, or an acute philosopher, he would have been received with eagerness. But none were desirous to hear the simple religion of Jesus of Nazareth, who proved his mission, not by subtleties of eloquence, but by miracles evincing the power of God, and who died at last on the ignominious cross. Paul, however, in opposition to Jew and Greek, determined to know nothing of a worldly Messiah, nothing of any old

or new scheme of philosophy; but to know and to preach Jesus Christ, and to exhibit him in a light which Judaism and philosophy would alike abhor, as crucified for the recovery of men from error, sin, and condemnation. In other words, he resolved to preach the religion of Jesus, in its greatest simplicity, without softening its most offensive feature, the cross of its author, or without borrowing anything from Moses or any Gentile philosopher to give currency to his doctrines. This is the amount of what Paul teaches in these chapters.

We must not imagine, when we read these chapters, that Corinth was a city of professing Christians; that among these Christians a difference of opinion had arisen as to the proper subjects of christian preaching, and that Paul intended to specify the topic on which ministers should chiefly or exclusively insist. This, I fear, is the common impression under which this portion of scripture is read; but this is altogether erroneous. No controversy of this kind existed; and Paul, in these chapters, had not the most distant idea of recommending one part of the gospel in preference to others, but intended to recommend the whole gospel, the whole religion of Jesus Christ, in distinction from Judaism and Gentile philosophy. The dangers of the Corinthian Christians required that he should employ every effort to secure their fidelity to the simple gospel of Jesus. Having been educated in the Jewish or Heathen religions; living in the midst of Jews and Heathens; hearing perpetually, from one class, that the Messiah was to be a triumphant prince, and that without submission to the law of Moses no one could partake his blessings; and hearing from the other perpetual praises of this and another philosopher, and perpetual derision of the gospel, because in its doctrines and style it bore no resem-

b lance to the refinements and rhetoric of their most celebrated sages ; the Corinthian Christians, in these trying circumstances, were strongly tempted to assimilate the gospel to the prevalent religions, to blend with it foreign doctrines, to keep the humiliation of its author out of sight, and to teach it as a system of philosophy resting on subtle reasoning rather than on miracles and the authority of God. To save them from this danger, a danger which at present we can hardly estimate, the apostle reminded them, that when he came to them he came not with ‘ excellency of speech and with enticing words of man’s wisdom,’ but in demonstration of the Spirit and of miraculous powers ; that he did not comply with the demands of Greek or Jew ; that he preached a crucified Messiah, and no other teacher or deliverer ; and that he always insisted, that the religion of Jesus, unaided by Judaism or philosophy, was able to make men wise to salvation. He also reminded them, that this preaching, however branded as foolishness, had proved divinely powerful, and had saved them from that ignorance of God, from which human wisdom had been unable to deliver them. These remarks, I hope, will assist common readers in understanding the chapters under consideration.

We are too apt, in reading the New Testament and particularly the Epistles, to forget, that the gospel was a new religion, and that the apostles were called to preach Jesus to those who perhaps had never before heard his name, and whose prejudices and passions prepared them to condemn and reject his claims. In these circumstances, they had to begin at the very foundation, to prove to the unbelieving world that Jesus was the Messiah, or sent from God to instruct and save mankind. This is often called ‘ preaching Christ,’ especially in the

Acts.—When converts were made, the work of the apostles was not ended. These converts wished to bring with them a part of their old religion into the church; and some of the Jews even insisted that obedience to Moses was essential to salvation. These errors the apostles resolutely opposed, and having previously established the Messiahship of Jesus, they next proceeded to establish the sufficiency and perfection of his religion, to show that faith in him, or reception of his gospel was all that was required to salvation. This is sometimes called ‘preaching Christ.’—These difficulties, which called the apostles to so much anxiety and toil, are now in a great measure removed. Christian ministers, at the present day, are not often called to preach Christ in opposition to the infidel, and never in opposition to the weak convert who would incorporate Judaism or Gentile philosophy with Christianity. The great foundation, on which the apostles spent so much strength, is now firmly laid. Our hearers generally acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, sent by God to be the light of the world, and ‘able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him.’ We are therefore seldom called to preach Christ in the senses which have just been considered, and our preaching must of course differ in a measure from that of the apostles. But there is another sense of preaching Christ, involved in both the preceding, in which our work precisely accords with theirs. Like them, we are to unfold to those who acknowledge Jesus as their Lord, all the truths, motives, and precepts which he has left to guide and quicken men to excellence, and to prepare them for a happy immortality.

DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON, 1810.

ISAIAH II. 4.

'NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE.'

I HAVE chosen a subject, which may seem at first view not altogether appropriate to the present occasion, the subject of WAR. It may be thought, that an address to an assembly composed chiefly of the ministers of religion, should be confined to the duties, dangers, encouragements of the sacred office. But I have been induced to select this topic, because, after the slumber of ages, Christians seem to be awakening to a sense of the pacific character of their religion, and because I understood, that this Convention were at this anniversary to consider the interesting question, whether no method could be devised for enlightening the public mind on the nature and guilt of war. I was unwilling that this subject should be approached and dismissed as an ordinary affair. I feared, that in the pressure of business, we might be satisfied with the expression of customary disapprobation; and that, having in this way relieved our consciences, we should relapse into our former indifference, and continue to hear the howlings

of this dreadful storm of human passions with as much concern as before. I resolved to urge on you the duty, and I hoped to excite in you the purpose, of making some new and persevering efforts for the abolition of this worst vestige of barbarism, this grossest outrage on the principles of Christianity. The day I trust is coming, when Christians will look back with gratitude and affection on those men, who, in ages of conflict and bloodshed, cherished generous hopes of human improvement, withstood the violence of corrupt opinion, held forth, amidst the general darkness, the pure and mild light of Christianity, and thus ushered in a new and peaceful era in the history of mankind. May you, my brethren, be included in the grateful recollection of that day.

The *miseries* and *crimes* of war, its *sources*, its *remedies*, will be the subjects of our present attention.

In detailing its miseries and crimes, there is no temptation to recur to unreal or exaggerated horrors. No depth of coloring can approach reality. It is lamentable, that we need a delineation of the calamities of war, to rouse us to exertion. The mere idea of human beings employing every power and faculty in the work of mutual destruction, ought to send a shuddering through the frame. But on this subject, our sensibilities are dreadfully sluggish and dead. Our ordinary sympathies seem to forsake us, when war is named. The sufferings and death of a single fellow being often excite a tender and active compassion; but we hear without emotion of thousands enduring every variety of wo in war. A single murder in peace thrills through our frames. The countless murders of war are heard as an amusing tale. The execution of a criminal depresses the mind, and philanthropy is laboring to substitute milder punish-

ments for death. But benevolence has hardly made an effort to snatch from sudden and untimely death, the innumerable victims immolated on the altar of war. This insensibility demands, that the miseries and crimes of war should be placed before us with minuteness, with energy, with strong and indignant feeling.

The miseries of war may be easily conceived from its very nature. By war, we understand the resort of nations to force, violence, and the most dreaded methods of destruction and devastation. In war, the strength, skill, courage, energy, and resources of a whole people are concentrated for the infliction of pain and death. The bowels of the earth are explored, the most active elements combined, the resources of art and nature exhausted, to increase the power of man in destroying his fellow creatures.

Would you learn what destruction man, when thus aided, can spread around him? Look then at that extensive region, desolate and overspread with ruins; its forests rent, as if blasted by lightning; its villages prostrated, as by an earthquake; its fields barren, as if swept by storms. Not long ago, the sun shone on no happier spot. But ravaging armies prowled over it; war frowned on it; and its fruitfulness and happiness are fled. Here thousands and ten thousands were gathered from distant provinces, not to embrace as brethren, but to renounce the tie of brotherhood; and thousands, in the vigor of life, when least prepared for death, were hewn down and scattered like chaff before the whirlwind.

Repair, my friends, in thought, to a field of recent battle. Here, are heaps of slain, weltering in their own blood, their bodies mangled, their limbs shattered, and almost every vestige of the human form and counte-

nance destroyed. Here, are multitudes trodden under foot, and the war-horse has left the trace of his hoof in many a crushed and mutilated frame. Here, are severer sufferers ; they live, but live without hope or consolation. Justice despatches the criminal with a single stroke ; but the victims of war, falling by casual, undirected blows, often expire in lingering agony, their deep groans moving no compassion, their limbs writhing on the earth with pain, their lips parched with a burning thirst, their wounds open to the chilling air, the memory of home rushing on their minds, but not a voice of friendship or comfort reaching their ears. Amidst this scene of horrors, you see the bird and beast of prey gorging themselves with the dead or dying, and human plunderers rifling the warm and almost palpitating remains of the slain. If you extend your eye beyond the immediate field of battle, and follow the track of the victorious and pursuing army, you see the roads strewed with the dead ; you see scattered flocks, and harvests trampled under foot, the smoking ruins of cottages, and the miserable inhabitants flying in want and despair ; and even yet, the horrors of a single battle are not exhausted. Some of the deepest pangs, which it inflicts, are silent, retired, enduring, to be read in the widow's countenance, in the unprotected orphan, in the aged parent, in affection cherishing the memory of the slain, and weeping that it could not minister to their last pangs.

I have asked you to traverse in thought, a field of battle. There is another scene often presented in war, perhaps more terrible. I refer to a besieged city. The most horrible pages in history are those, which record the reduction of strongly fortified places. In a besieged city, are collected all descriptions and ages of mankind,

women, children, the old, the infirm. Day and night, the weapons of death and conflagration fly around them. They see the approaches of the foe, the trembling bulwark, and the fainting strength of their defenders. They are worn with famine, and on famine presses pestilence. At length the assault is made, every barrier is broken down, and a lawless soldiery, exasperated by resistance, and burning with lust and cruelty, are scattered through the streets. The domestic retreat is violated; and even the house of God, is no longer a sanctuary. Venerable age is no protection, female purity no defence. Is woman spared amidst the slaughter of father, brother, husband, and son? She is spared for a fate, which makes death in comparison a merciful doom. With such heart-rending scenes, history abounds; and what better fruits can you expect from war?

These views are the most obvious and striking which war presents. There are more secret influences, appealing less powerfully to the senses and imagination, but deeply affecting to a reflecting and benevolent mind.

— Consider, first, the condition of those who are immediately engaged in war? The sufferings of soldiers from battle we have seen; but their sufferings are not limited to the period of conflict. The whole of war is a succession of exposures too severe for human nature. Death employs other weapons than the sword. It is computed, that in ordinary wars, greater numbers perish by sickness than in battle. Exhausted by long and rapid marches, by unwholesome food, by exposure to storms, by excessive labor under a burning sky through the day, and by interrupted and restless sleep on the damp ground and in the chilling atmosphere of night, thousands after thousands of the young pine away and die. They anticipated that they should fall, if to fall

should be their lot, in what they called the field of honor ; but they perish in the inglorious and crowded hospital, surrounded with sights and sounds of wo, far from home and every friend, and denied those tender offices which sickness and expiring nature require.

Consider next the influence of war on the character of those who make it their trade. They let themselves for slaughter, place themselves servile instruments, passive machines, in the hands of rulers, to execute the bloodiest mandates, without a thought on the justice of the cause in which they are engaged. What a school is this for the human character ! From men trained in battle to ferocity, accustomed to the perpetration of cruel deeds, accustomed to take human life without sorrow or remorse, habituated to esteem an unthinking courage a substitute for every virtue, encouraged by plunder to prodigality, taught improvidence by perpetual hazard and exposure, restrained only by an iron discipline which is withdrawn in peace, and unfitted by the restless and irregular career of war for the calm and uniform pursuits of ordinary life ; from such men, what ought to be expected but contempt of human rights and of the laws of God ? From the nature of his calling, the soldier is almost driven to sport with the thought of death, to defy and deride it, and of course, to banish the thought of that retribution to which it leads ; and though of all men the most exposed to sudden death, he is too often of all men most unprepared to appear before his judge.

The influence of war on the community at large, on its prosperity, its morals, and its political institutions, though less striking than on the soldiery, is yet baleful. How often is a community impoverished to sustain a war in which it has no interest. Public burdens are

aggravated, whilst the means of sustaining them are reduced. Internal improvements are neglected. The revenue of the state is exhausted in military establishments, or flows through secret channels into the coffers of corrupt men, whom war exalts to power and office. The regular employments of peace are disturbed. Industry in many of its branches is suspended. The laborer, ground with want, and driven to despair by the clamor of his suffering family, becomes a soldier in a cause which he condemns, and thus the country is drained of its most effective population. The people are stripped and reduced, whilst the authors of war retrench not a comfort, and often fatten on the spoils and woes of their country.

The influence of war on the morals of society is also to be deprecated. The suspension of industry multiplies want; and criminal modes of subsistence are the resource of the suffering. Commerce, shackled and endangered, loses its upright and honorable character, and becomes a system of stratagem and collusion. In war, the moral sentiments of a community are perverted by the admiration of military exploits. The milder virtues of Christianity are eclipsed by the baleful lustre thrown round a ferocious courage. The disinterested, the benignant, the merciful, the forgiving, those whom Jesus has pronounced blessed and honorable, must give place to the hero, whose character is stained not only with blood, but sometimes with the foulest vices, but all whose stains are washed away by victory. War especially injures the moral feelings of a people by making human nature cheap in their estimation, and human life of as little worth as that of an insect or a brute.

War diffuses through a community unfriendly and malignant passions. Nations, exasperated by mutual injuries, burn for each others' humiliation and ruin. They delight to hear that famine, pestilence, want, defeat, and the most dreadful scourges which Providence sends on a guilty world, are desolating a hostile community. The slaughter of thousands of fellow beings, instead of awaking pity, flushes them with delirious joy illuminates the city, and dissolves the whole country in revelry and riot. Thus the heart of man is hardened. His worst passions are nourished. He renounces the bonds and sympathies of humanity. Were the prayers or rather the curses of warring nations prevalent in heaven, the whole earth would long since have become a desert. The human race, with all their labors and improvements, would have perished under the sentence of universal extermination.

But war not only assails the prosperity and morals of a community; its influence on the political condition is threatening. It arms government with a dangerous patronage, multiplies dependants and instruments of oppression, and generates a power, which, in the hands of the energetic and aspiring, endangers a free constitution. War organizes a body of men, who lose the feelings of the citizen in the soldier; whose habits detach them from the community; whose ruling passion is devotion to a chief; who are inured in the camp to despotic sway; who are accustomed to accomplish their ends by force, and to sport with the rights and happiness of their fellow beings; who delight in tumult, adventure, and peril; and turn with disgust and scorn from the quiet labors of peace. Is it wonderful, that such protectors of a state should look with contempt on the weakness of the protected, and should lend

themselves base instruments to the subversion of that freedom which they do not themselves enjoy? In a community, in which precedence is given to the military profession, freedom cannot long endure. The encroachments of power at home are expiated by foreign triumphs. The essential interests and rights of the state are sacrificed to a false and fatal glory. Its intelligence and vigor, instead of presenting a bulwark to domestic usurpation, are expended in military achievements. Its most active and aspiring citizens rush to the army, and become subservient to the power which dispenses honor. The nation is victorious, but the recompense of its toils is a yoke as galling as that which it imposes on other communities.

Thus, war is to be ranked among the most dreadful calamities which fall on a guilty world; and, what deserves consideration, it tends to multiply and perpetuate itself without end. It feeds and grows on the blood which it sheds. The passions, from which it springs, gain strength and fury from indulgence. The successful nation, flushed by victory, pants for new laurels; whilst the humbled nation, irritated by defeat, is impatient to redeem its honor and repair its losses. Peace becomes a truce, a feverish repose, a respite to sharpen anew the sword, and to prepare for future struggles. Under professions of friendship, lurk hatred and distrust; and a spark suffices to renew the mighty conflagration. When from these causes, large military establishments are formed, and a military spirit kindled, war becomes a necessary part of policy. A foreign field must be found for the energies and passions of a martial people. To disband a numerous and veteran soldiery, would be to let loose a dangerous horde on society. The bloodhounds must be sent forth on other commu-

nities, lest they rend the bosom of their own country. Thus war extends and multiplies itself. No sooner is one storm scattered, than the sky is darkened with the gathering horrors of another. Accordingly, war has been the mournful legacy of every generation to that which succeeds it. Every age has had its conflicts. Every country has in turn been the seat of devastation and slaughter. The dearest interests and rights of every nation have been again and again committed to the hazards of a game, of all others the most uncertain, and in which, from its very nature, success too often attends on the fiercest courage and the basest fraud.

Such, my friends, is an unexaggerated, and I will add, a faint delineation of the miseries of war; and to all these miseries and crimes the human race have been continually exposed, for no worthier cause, than to enlarge an empire already tottering under its unwieldy weight, to extend an iron despotism, to support some idle pretension, to repel some unreal or exaggerated injury. For no worthier cause, human blood has been poured out as water, and millions of rational and immortal beings have been driven like sheep to the field of slaughter.

Having considered the crimes and miseries of war, I proceed, as I proposed, to inquire into its sources; an important branch of our subject, for it is only by a knowledge of the sources, that we can be guided to the remedies of war. And here, I doubt not, many will imagine that the first place ought to be given to malignity and hatred. But justice to human nature requires, that we ascribe to national animosities a more limited operation, than is usually assigned to them, in the production of this calamity. It is indeed, true, that ambi-

tious men, who have an interest in war, too often accomplish their views by appealing to the malignant feelings of a community, by exaggerating its wrongs, ridiculing its forbearance, and reviving ancient jealousies and resentments. But it is believed, that were not malignity and revenge aided by the concurrence of higher principles, the false splendor of this barbarous custom might easily be obscured, and its ravages stayed.

One of the great springs of war may be found in a very strong and general propensity of human nature, in the love of excitement, of emotion, of strong interest; a propensity which gives a charm to those bold and hazardous enterprises which call forth all the energies of our nature. No state of mind, not even positive suffering, is more painful than the want of interesting objects. The vacant soul preys on itself, and often rushes with impatience from the security which demands no effort, to the brink of peril. This part of human nature is seen in the kind of pleasures which have always been preferred. Why has the first rank among sports been given to the chase? Because its difficulties, hardships, hazards, tumults, awaken the mind, and give to it a new consciousness of existence, and a deep feeling of its powers. What is the charm which attaches the statesman to an office which almost weighs him down with labor and an appalling responsibility? He finds much of his compensation in the powerful emotion and interest, awakened by the very hardships of his lot, by conflict with vigorous minds, by the opposition of rivals, and by the alternations of success and defeat. What hurries to the gaming table the man of prosperous fortune and ample resource? The dread of apathy, the love of strong feeling and of mental agitation. A deeper interest is felt in hazarding, than in securing wealth,

and the temptation is irresistible. One more example of this propensity may be seen in the attachment of pirates and highwaymen to their dreadful employment. Its excess of peril has given it a terrible interest; and to a man who has long conversed with its dangers, the ordinary pursuits of life are vapid, tasteless, and disgusting. We have here one spring of war. War is of all games the deepest, awakening most powerfully the soul, and, of course, presenting powerful attraction to those restless and adventurous minds, which pant for scenes of greater experiment and exposure than peace affords. The savage, finding in his uncultivated modes of life few objects of interest, few sources of emotion, burns for war as a field for his restless energy. Civilized men, too, find a pleasure in war, as an excitement of the mind. They follow, with an eager concern, the movements of armies, and wait the issue of battles with a deep suspense, an alternation of hope and fear, inconceivably more interesting than the unvaried uniformity of peaceful pursuits.

Another powerful principle of our nature, which is the spring of war, is the passion for superiority, for triumph, for power. The human mind is aspiring, impatient of inferiority, and eager for preeminence and control. I need not enlarge on the predominance of this passion in rulers, whose love of power is influenced by the possession, and who are ever restless to extend their sway. It is more important to observe, that were this desire restrained to the breasts of rulers, war would move with a sluggish pace. But the passion for power and superiority is universal; and as every individual, from his intimate union with the community, is accustomed to appropriate its triumphs to himself, there is a general promptness to engage in any contest, by which

the community may obtain an ascendancy over other nations. The desire, that our country should surpass all others, would not be criminal, did we understand in what respects it is most honorable for a nation to excel; did we feel, that the glory of a state consists in intellectual and moral superiority, in preeminence of knowledge, freedom, and purity. But to the mass of a people, this form of preeminence is too refined and unsubstantial. There is another kind of triumph which they better understand, the triumph of physical power, triumph in battle, triumph, not over the minds, but the territory of another state. Here is a palpable, visible superiority; and for this, a people are willing to submit to severe privations. A victory blots out the memory of their sufferings, and in boasting of their extended power, they find a compensation for many woes.

I now proceed to another powerful spring of war, and it is the admiration of the brilliant qualities displayed in war. These qualities, more than all things, have prevented an impression of the crimes and miseries of this savage custom. Many delight in war, not for its carnage and woes, but for its valor and apparent magnanimity, for the self-command of the hero, the fortitude which despises suffering, the resolution which courts danger, the superiority of the mind to the body, to sensation, to fear. Let us be just to human nature even in its errors and excesses. Men seldom delight in war, considered merely as a source of misery. When they hear of battles, the picture which rises to their view is not what it should be, a picture of extreme wretchedness, of the wounded, the mangled, the slain. These horrors are hidden under the splendor of those mighty energies, which break forth amidst the perils of conflict, and which human nature contemplates with an

intense and heart-thrilling delight. Attention hurries from the heaps of the slaughtered to the victorious chief, whose single mind pervades and animates a host, and directs with stern composure the storm of battle ; and the ruin which he spreads is forgotten in admiration of his power. This admiration has, in all ages, been expressed by the most unequivocal signs. Why that garland woven ? that arch erected ? that festive board spread ? These are tributes to the warrior. Whilst the peaceful sovereign, who scatters blessings with the silence and constancy of Providence, is received with a faint applause, men assemble in crowds to hail the conqueror, perhaps a monster in human form, whose private life is blackened with lust and crime, and whose greatness is built on perfidy and usurpation.* Thus war is the surest and speediest road to renown ; and war will never cease, while the field of battle is the field of glory, and the most luxuriant laurels grow from a root nourished with blood.

Another cause of war is a false patriotism. It is natural and a generous impulse of nature to love the country which gave us birth, by whose institutions we have been moulded, by whose laws defended, and with whose soil and scenery innumerable associations of early years, of domestic affection, and of friendship, have been formed. But this sentiment often degenerates into a narrow, partial, exclusive attachment, alienating us from other branches of the human family, and instigating to aggression on other states. In ancient times, this principle was developed with wonderful energy, and sometimes absorbed every other sentiment. To the Roman, Rome was the universe. Other nations were of no value but to grace her triumphs, and illustrate her power ; and he, who in private life would have disdained injus-

tice and oppression, exulted in the successful violence, by which other nations were bound to the chariot wheels of this mistress of the world. This spirit still exists. The tie of country is thought to absolve men from the obligations of universal justice and humanity. Statesmen and rulers are expected to build up their own country at the expense of others ; and in the false patriotism of the citizen, they have a security for any outrages, which are sanctioned by success.

Let me mention one other spring of war. I mean the impressions we receive in early life. In our early years, we know war only as it offers itself to us at a review ; not arrayed in terror, not stalking over fields of the slain, and desolated regions, its eye flashing with fury, and its sword reeking with blood. War, as we first see it, is decked with gay and splendid trappings, and wears a countenance of joy. It moves with a measured and graceful step, to the sound of the heart-stirring fife and drum. Its instruments of death wound only the air. Such is war ; the youthful eye is dazzled with its ornaments ; the youthful heart dances to its animated sounds. It seems a pastime full of spirit and activity, the very sport in which youth delights. These false views of war are confirmed by our earliest reading. We are intoxicated with the exploits of the conqueror, as recorded in real history or in glowing fiction. We follow, with a sympathetic ardor, his rapid and triumphant career in battle, and, unused as we are to suffering and death, forget the fallen and miserable who are crushed under his victorious car. Particularly by the study of the ancient poets and historians, the sentiments of early and barbarous ages on the subject of war, are kept alive in the mind. The trumpet, which roused the fury of Achilles of the hordes of Greece, still

resounds in our ears ; and though Christians by profession, some of our earliest and deepest impressions are received in the school of uncivilized antiquity. Even where these impressions in favor of war are not received in youth, we yet learn from our early familiarity with it, to consider it as a necessary evil, an essential part of our condition. We become reconciled to it as to a fixed law of our nature ; and consider the thought of its abolition as extravagant as an attempt to chain the winds or arrest the lightning.

I have thus attempted to unfold the principal causes of war. They are, you perceive, of a moral nature. They may be resolved into wrong views of human glory, and into excesses of passions and desires, which, by right direction, would promote the best interests of humanity. From these causes we learn, that this savage custom is to be repressed by moral means, by salutary influences on the sentiments and principles of mankind. And thus we are led to our last topic, the remedies of war. In introducing the observations which I have to offer on this branch of the subject, I feel myself bound to suggest an important caution. Let not the cause of peace be injured by the assertion of extreme and indefensible principles. I particularly refer to the principle, that war is absolutely, and in all possible cases, unlawful, and prohibited by Christianity. This doctrine is considered by a great majority of the judicious and enlightened, as endangering the best interests of society ; and it ought not therefore to be connected with our efforts for the diffusion of peace, unless it appear to us a clear and indubitable truth. War, as it is commonly waged, is indeed a tremendous evil ; but national subjugation is a greater evil than a war of

defence ; and a community seems to me to possess an indisputable right to resort to such a war, when all other means have failed for the security of its existence or freedom. It is universally admitted, that a community may employ force to repress the rapacity and violence of its own citizens, to disarm and restrain its internal foes ; and on what ground can we deny to it the right of repelling the inroads and aggressions of a foreign power ? If a government may not lawfully resist a foreign army, invading its territory to desolate and subdue, on what principles can we justify a resistance of a combination of its own citizens for the same injurious purpose ? Government is instituted for the very purpose of protecting the community from all violence, no matter by what hands it may be offered ; and rulers would be unfaithful to their trust, were they to abandon the rights, interests, and improvements of society to unprincipled rapacity, whether of domestic or foreign foes.

We are indeed told, that the language of scripture is, ‘resist not evil.’ But the scriptures are given to us as reasonable beings. We must remember, that to the renunciation of reason in the interpretation of scripture, we owe those absurdities, which have sunk Christianity almost to the level of Heathenism. If the precept to ‘resist not evil’ admit no exception, then civil government is prostrated ; then the magistrate must, in no case, resist the injurious ; then the subject must, in no case, employ the aid of the laws to enforce his rights. The very end and office of government is, to *resist* evil men. For this, the civil magistrate bears the sword ; and he should beware of interpretations of the scriptures, which would lead him to bear it in vain. The doctrine of the absolute unlawfulness of war is thought by its advocates to be necessary to a successful opposition to

this barbarous custom. But, were we employed to restore peace to a contentious neighbourhood, we should not consider ourselves as obliged to teach, that self-defence is in every possible case a crime ; and equally useless is this principle, in our labors for the pacification of the world. Without taking this uncertain and dangerous ground, we may, and ought to assail war, by assaulting the principles and passions which give it birth, and by improving and exalting the moral sentiments of mankind.

For example ; important service may be rendered to the cause of peace, by communicating and enforcing just and elevated sentiments in relation to the true honor of rulers. Let us teach, that the prosperity, and not the extent of a state, is the measure of a ruler's glory ; that the brute force and crooked policy which annex a conquest, are infinitely inferior to the wisdom, justice, and beneficence which make a country happy ; and that the earth holds not a more abandoned monster, than the sovereign, who, intrusted with the dearest interests of a people, commits them to the dreadful hazards of war, that he may extend his prostituted power, and fill the earth with his worthless name. Let us exhibit to the honor and veneration of mankind the character of the christian ruler, who, disdaining the cheap and vulgar honor of a conqueror, aspires to a new and more enduring glory ; who, casting away the long tried weapons of intrigue and violence, adheres with a holy and unshaken confidence to justice and philanthropy, as a nation's best defence ; and who considers himself as exalted by God, only that he may shed down blessings, and be as a beneficent deity to the world.

To these instructions in relation to the true glory of rulers, should be added, just sentiments as to the glory

of nations. Let us teach, that the honor of a nation consists, not in the forced and reluctant submission of other states, but in equal laws and free institutions, in cultivated fields and prosperous cities, in the development of intellectual and moral power, in the diffusion of knowledge, in magnanimity and justice, in the virtues and blessings of peace. Let us never be weary in reprobating that infernal spirit of conquest, by which a nation becomes the terror and abhorrence of the world, and inevitably prepares a tomb, at best a splendid tomb, for its own liberties and prosperity. Nothing has been more common, than for nations to imagine themselves great and glorious on the ground of foreign conquest, when at home they have been loaded with chains. Cannot these gross and monstrous delusions be scattered? Can nothing be done to persuade christian nations to engage in a new and untried race of glory, in generous competitions, in a noble contest for superiority in wise legislation and internal improvements, in the spirit of liberty and humanity?

Another most important method of promoting the cause of peace is, to turn men's admiration from military courage to qualities of real nobleness and dignity. It is time that the childish admiration of courage should give place to more manly sentiments; and in proportion as we effect this change, we shall shake the main pillar of war, we shall rob military life of its chief attraction. Courage is a very doubtful quality, springing from very different sources, and possessing a corresponding variety of character. Courage sometimes results from mental weakness. Peril is confronted, because the mind wants comprehension to discern its extent. This is often the courage of youth, the courage of unreflecting ignorance, a contempt of peril because peril is but dimly seen.—

Courage still more frequently springs from physical temperament, from a rigid fibre and iron nerves, and deserves as little praise, as the proportion of the form, or the beauty of the countenance.—Again, every passion, which is strong enough to overcome the passion of fear, and to exclude by its vehemence the idea of danger, communicates at least a temporary courage. Thus revenge, when it burns with great fury, gives a terrible energy to the mind, and has sometimes impelled men to meet certain death, that they might inflict the same fate on an enemy. You see the doubtful nature of courage. It is often associated with the worst vices. The most wonderful examples of it may be found in the history of pirates and robbers, whose fearlessness is generally proportioned to the insensibility of their consciences, and to the enormity of their crimes. Courage is also exhibited with astonishing power in barbarous countries, where the child is trained to despise the hardships and pains to which he is exposed by his condition ; where the absence of civil laws obliges every man to be his own defender; and where, from the imperfection of moral sentiment, corporal strength and ferocious courage are counted the noblest qualities of human nature. The common courage of armies is equally worthless with that of the pirate and the savage. A considerable part of almost every army, so far from deriving their resolution from love of country and a sense of justice, can hardly be said to have a country, and have been driven into the ranks by necessities, which were generated by vice. These are the brave soldiers, whose praises we hear ; brave from the absence of all reflection ; prodigal of life, because their vices have fobbed life of its blessings ; brave from sympathy ; brave from the thirst of plunder ; and especially brave, because

the sword of martial law is hanging over their heads. Accordingly, military courage is easily attained by the most debased and unprincipled men. The common drunkard of the streets, who is enlisted in a fit of intoxication, when thrown into the ranks among the unthinking and profane, subjected to the rigor of martial discipline, familiarized by exposure to the idea of danger, and menaced with death if he betray a symptom of fear, becomes as brave as his officer, whose courage may often be traced to the same dread of punishment, and to fear of severer infamy, than attends on the cowardice of the common soldier. Let the tribute of honor be freely and liberally given to the soldier of principle, who exposes his life for a cause which his conscience approves, and who mingles clemency and mercy with the joy of triumph. But as for the multitudes of military men, who regard war as a trade by which to thrive, who hire themselves to fight and slay in any cause, and who destroy their fellow beings with as little concern, as the husbandman does the vermin that infest his fields, I know no class of men on whom admiration can more unjustly and more injuriously be bestowed. Let us labor, my brethren, to direct the admiration and love of mankind to another and infinitely higher kind of greatness, to that true magnanimity, which is prodigal of ease and life in the service of God and mankind, and which proves its courage by unshaken adherence, amidst scorn and danger, to truth and virtue. Let the records of past ages be explored, to rescue from oblivion, not the wasteful conqueror, whose path was as the whirlwind, but the benefactors of the human race, martyrs to the interests of freedom and religion, men who have broken the chain of the slave, who have traversed the earth to shed consolation into the cell of the prisoner,

or whose sublime faculties have explored and revealed useful and ennobling truths. Can nothing be done to hasten the time, when to such men eloquence and poetry shall offer their glowing homage? when for these the statue and monument shall be erected, the canvass be animated, and the laurel entwined? and when to these the admiration of the young shall be directed, as their guides and forerunners to glory and immortality?

I proceed to another method of promoting the cause of peace. Let christian ministers exhibit with greater clearness and distinctness, than ever they have done, the pacific and benevolent spirit of Christianity. My brethren, this spirit ought to hold the same place in our preaching, which it holds in the gospel of our Lord. Instead of being crowded and lost among other subjects, it should stand in the front of christian graces; it should be inculcated as the life and essence of our religion. We should teach men, that charity is greater than faith and hope; that God is love or benevolence; and that love is the brightest communication of divinity to the human soul. We should exhibit Jesus in all the amableness of his character, now shedding tears over Jerusalem, and now, his blood on Calvary, and in his last hours recommending his own sublime love as the badge and distinction of his followers. We should teach men, that it is the property of the benevolence of Christianity, to diffuse itself, like the light and rain of heaven, to disdain the limits of rivers, mountains, or oceans, by which nations are divided, and to embrace every human being as a brother. Let us never forget, that our preaching is evangelical, just in proportion as it inculcates and awakens this disinterested and unbounded charity; and that our hearers are Christians, just as far, and no farther than they delight in peace and beneficence.

It is a painful truth, which ought not to be suppressed, that the pacific influence of the gospel has been greatly obstructed by the disposition, which has prevailed in all ages, and especially among christian ministers, to give importance to the peculiarities of sects, and to rear walls of partition between different denominations. Shame ought to cover the face of the believer, when he remembers, that under no religion have intolerance and persecution raged more fiercely, than under the gospel of the meek and forbearing Saviour. Christians have made the earth to reek with blood and to resound with denunciation. Can we wonder, that, while the spirit of war has been cherished in the very bosom of the church, it has continued to ravage among the nations? Were the true spirit of Christianity to be inculcated with but half the zeal, which has been wasted on doubtful and disputed doctrines, a sympathy, a cooperation might in a very short time be produced among Christians of every nation, most propitious to the pacification of the world. In consequence of the progress of knowledge and the extension of commerce, Christians of both hemispheres are at this moment brought nearer to one another, than at any former period; and an intercourse, founded on religious sympathies, is gradually connecting the most distant regions. What a powerful weapon is furnished by this new bond of union to the ministers and friends of peace! Should not the auspicious moment be seized to inculcate on all Christians, in all regions, that they owe their first allegiance to their common Lord of heaven, whose first, and last, and great command is, love? Should they not be taught to look with a shuddering abhorrence on war, which continually summons to the field of battle, under opposing standards, the followers of the same Saviour, and commands

them to imbue their hands in each others' blood? Once let Christians of every nation be brought to espouse the cause of peace with one heart and one voice, and their labor will not be in vain in the Lord. Human affairs will rapidly assume a new and milder aspect. The predicted ages of peace will dawn on the world. Public opinion will be purified. The false lustre of the hero will grow dim. A nobler order of character will be admired and diffused. The kingdoms of the world will gradually become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ.

My friends, I did intend, but I have not time, to notice the arguments which are urged in support of war. Let me only say, that the common argument, that war is necessary to awaken the boldness, energy, and noblest qualities of human nature, will, I hope, receive a practical refutation in the friends of philanthropy and peace. Let it appear in your lives, that you need not this spark from hell to kindle a heroic resolution in your breasts. Let it appear, that a pacific spirit has no affinity with a tame and feeble character. Let us prove, that courage, the virtue which has been thought to flourish most in the rough field of war, may be reared to a more generous height, and to a firmer texture, in the bosom of peace. Let it be seen, that it is not fear, but principle, which has made us the enemies of war. In every enterprise of philanthropy which demands daring, and sacrifice, and exposure to hardship and toil, let us embark with serenity and joy. Be it our part, to exhibit an undaunted, unshaken, unwearied resolution, not in spreading ruin, but in serving God and mankind, in alleviating human misery, in diffusing truth and virtue, and especially in opposing war. The doctrines of Christianity have had many martyrs. Let

us be willing, if God shall require it, to be martyrs to its spirit, the neglected, insulted spirit of peace and love. In a better service we cannot live; in a nobler cause we cannot die. It is the cause of Jesus Christ, supported by Almighty Goodness, and appointed to triumph over the passions and delusions of men, the customs of ages, and the fallen monuments of the forgotten conqueror.

NOTE.

I HAVE deferred to this place a few remarks on the arguments which are usually adduced in support of war.

War, it is said, kindles patriotism; by fighting for our country, we learn to love it. But the patriotism, which is cherished by war, is ordinarily false and spurious, a vice and not a virtue, a scourge to the world, a narrow, unjust passion, which aims to exalt a particular state on the humiliation and destruction of other nations. A genuine, enlightened patriot discerns, that the welfare of his own country is involved in the general progress of society; and, in the character of a patriot as well as of a Christian, he rejoices in the liberty and prosperity of other communities, and is anxious to maintain with them the relations of peace and amity.

It is said, that a military spirit is the defender of a country. But it more frequently endangers the vital interests of a nation, by embroiling it with other states. This spirit, like every other passion, is impatient for gratification, and often precipitates a country into unnecessary war. A people have no need of a military spirit. Let them be attached to their government and,

institutions by habit, by early associations, and especially by experimental conviction of their excellence, and they will never want means or spirit to defend them.

War is recommended as a method of redressing national grievances. But unhappily, the weapons of war, from their very nature, are often wielded most successfully by the unprincipled. Justice and force have little congeniality. Should not Christians everywhere strive to promote the reference of national as well as of individual disputes to an impartial umpire? Is a project of this nature more extravagant than the idea of reducing savage hordes to a state of regular society? The last has been accomplished. Is the first to be abandoned in despair?

It is said, that war sweeps off the idle, dissolute, and vicious members of the community. Monstrous argument! If a government may for this end plunge a nation into war, it may with equal justice consign to the executioner any number of its subjects, whom it may deem a burden on the state. The fact is, that war commonly generates as many profligates as it destroys. A disbanded army fills the community with at least as many abandoned members as at first it absorbed. There is another method, not quite so summary as war, of ridding a country of unprofitable and injurious citizens, but vastly more effectual; and a method, which will be applied with spirit and success, just in proportion as war shall yield to the light and spirit of Christianity. I refer to the exertions, which Christians have commenced, for the reformation and improvement of the ignorant and poor, and especially for the instruction and moral culture of indigent children. Christians are entreated to persevere, and abound in these godlike efforts. By diffusing moral and religious principles and

sober and industrious habits through the laboring classes of society, they will dry up one important source of war. They will destroy in a considerable degree the materials of armies. In proportion as these classes become well principled and industrious, poverty will disappear, the population of a country will be more and more proportioned to its resources, and of course the number will be diminished of those, who have no alternative but beggary or a camp. The moral care, which is at the present day extended to the poor, is one of the most honorable features of our age. Christians! remember, that your proper warfare is with ignorance and vice; and exhibit here the same unwearied and inventive energy, which has marked the warriors of the world.

It is sometimes said, that a military spirit favors liberty. But how is it, that nations, after fighting for ages, are so generally enslaved? The truth is, that liberty has no foundation but in private and public virtue; and virtue, as we have seen, is not the common growth of war.

But the great argument remains to be discussed. It is said, that without war to excite and invigorate the human mind, some of its noblest energies will slumber, and its highest qualities, courage, magnanimity, fortitude, will perish. To this I answer, that if war is to be encouraged among nations, because it nourishes energy and heroism, on the same principle war in our families, and war between neighbourhoods, villages, and cities ought to be encouraged; for such contests would equally tend to promote heroic daring and contempt of death. Why shall not different provinces of the same empire annually meet with the weapons of death, to keep alive their courage? We shrink at this suggestion with hor-

ror ; but why shall contests of nations, rather than of provinces or families, find shelter under this barbarous argument ?

I observe again ; if war be a blessing, because it awakens energy and courage, then the savage state is peculiarly privileged ; for every savage is a soldier, and his whole modes of life tend to form him to invincible resolution. On the same principle, those early periods of society were happy, when men were called to contend, not only with one another, but with beasts of prey ; for to these excitements we owe the heroism of Hercules and Theseus. On the same principle, the feudal ages were more favored than the present ; for then every baron was a military chief, every castle frowned defiance, and every vassal was trained to arms. And do we really wish, that the earth should again be overrun with monsters, or abandoned to savage or feudal violence, in order that heroes may be multiplied ? If not, let us cease to vindicate war as affording excitement to energy and courage.

I repeat, what I have observed in the preceding discourse, we need not war to awaken human energy. There is at least equal scope for courage and magnanimity in blessing, as in destroying mankind. The condition of the human race offers inexhaustible objects for enterprise, and fortitude, and magnanimity. In relieving the countless wants and sorrows of the world, in exploring unknown regions, in carrying the arts and virtues of civilisation to unimproved communities, in extending the bounds of knowledge, in diffusing the spirit of freedom, and especially in spreading the light and influence of Christianity, how much may be dared, how much endured ! Philanthropy invites us to services, which demand the most intense, and elevated, and

resolute, and adventurous activity. Let it not be imagined, that were nations imbued with the spirit of Christianity, they would slumber in ignoble ease, that instead of the high-minded murderers, who are formed on the present system of war, we should have effeminate and timid slaves. Christian benevolence is as active as it is forbearing. Let it once form the character of a people, and it will attach them to every important interest of society. It will call forth sympathy in behalf of the suffering in every region under heaven. It will give a new extension to the heart, open a wider sphere to enterprise, inspire a courage of exhaustless resource, and prompt to every sacrifice and exposure for the improvement and happiness of the human race. The energy of this principle has been tried and displayed in the fortitude of the martyr, and in the patient labors of those who have carried the gospel into the dreary abodes of idolatry. Away then with the argument, that war is needed as a nursery of heroism. The school of the peaceful Redeemer is infinitely more adapted to teach the nobler, as well as the milder virtues, which adorn humanity.

DISCOURSE

AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. JARED SPARKS.

BALTIMORE, 1819.

1 THESSALONIANS, V. 21.

"PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

THE peculiar circumstances of this occasion not only justify, but seem to demand a departure from the course generally followed by preachers at the introduction of a brother into the sacred office. It is usual to speak of the nature, design, duties and advantages of the christian ministry ; and on these topics I should now be happy to insist, did I not remember that a minister is to be given this day to a religious society, whose peculiarities of opinion have drawn upon them much remark, and may I not add, much reproach. Many good minds, many sincere Christians, I am aware, are apprehensive that the solemnities of this day are to give a degree of influence to principles which they deem false and injurious. The fears and anxieties of such men I respect ; and, believing that they are grounded in part on mistake, I have thought it my duty to lay before you, as clearly as I can, some of the distinguishing opinions of that class of Christians in our country, who are known to sympathize with this religious society. I

must ask your patience, for such a subject is not to be despatched in a narrow compass. I must also ask you to remember, that it is impossible to exhibit, in a single discourse, our views of every doctrine of revelation, much less the differences of opinion which are known to subsist among ourselves. I shall confine myself to topics, on which our sentiments have been misrepresented, or which distinguish us most widely from others. May I not hope to be heard with candor. God deliver us all from prejudice and unkindness, and fill us with the love of truth and virtue.

There are two natural divisions under which my thoughts will be arranged: I shall endeavour to unfold, 1st, The principles which we adopt in interpreting the Scriptures. And 2dly, Some of the doctrines, which the Scriptures, so interpreted, seem to us clearly to express.

I. We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception. We do not, however, attach equal importance to all the books in this collection. Our religion, we believe, lies chiefly in the New Testament. The dispensation of Moses, compared with that of Jesus, we consider as adapted to the childhood of the human race, a preparation for a nobler system, and chiefly useful now as serving to confirm and illustrate the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the only master of Christians, and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry, or by his inspired apostles, we regard as of divine authority, and profess to make the rule of our lives.

This authority, which we give to the Scriptures, is a reason, we conceive, for studying them with peculiar care, and for inquiring anxiously into the principles of interpretation, by which their true meaning may be ascertained. The principles adopted by the class of Christians, in whose name I speak; need to be explained, because they are often misunderstood. We are particularly accused of making an unwarrantable use of reason in the interpretation of Scripture. We are said to exalt reason above revelation, to prefer our own wisdom to God's. Loose and undefined charges of this kind are circulated so freely, that we think it due to ourselves, and to the cause of truth, to express our views with some particularity.

Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner, as that of other books. We believe that God, when he speaks to the human race, conforms, if we may so say, to the established rules of speaking and writing. How else would the Scriptures avail us more, than if communicated in an unknown tongue?

Now all books, and all conversation, require in the reader or hearer the constant exercise of reason; or their true import is only to be obtained by continual comparison and inference. Human language, you well know, admits various interpretations; and every word and every sentence must be modified and explained according to the subject which is discussed, according to the purposes, feelings, circumstances and principles of the writer, and according to the genius and idioms of the language which he uses. These are acknowledged principles in the interpretation of human writings; and a man, whose words should explain without reference

to these principles, would reproach us justly with a criminal want of candor, and an intention of obscuring or distorting his meaning.

Were the Bible written in a language and style of its own, did it consist of words, which admit but a single sense, and of sentences wholly detached from each other, there would be no place for the principles now laid down. We could not reason about it, as about other writings. But such a book would be of little worth; and perhaps, of all books, the Scriptures correspond least to this description. The word of God bears the stamp of the same hand, which we see in his works. It has infinite connexions and dependencies. Every proposition is linked with others, and is to be compared with others, that its full and precise import may be understood. Nothing stands alone. The New Testament is built on the Old. The Christian dispensation is a continuation of the Jewish, the completion of a vast scheme of providence, requiring great extent of view in the reader. Still more, the Bible treats of subjects on which we receive ideas from other sources besides itself; such subjects as the nature, passions, relations, and duties of man; and it expects us to restrain and modify its language by the known truths, which observation and experience furnish on these topics.

We profess not to know a book, which demands a more frequent exercise of reason than the Bible. In addition to the remarks now made on its infinite connexions, we may observe, that its style nowhere affects the precision of science, or the accuracy of definition. Its language is singularly glowing, bold and figurative, demanding more frequent departures from the literal sense, than that of our own age and country, and consequently demanding more continual exercise of judg-

ment.—We find too, that the different portions of this book, instead of being confined to general truths, refer perpetually to the times when they were written, to states of society, to modes of thinking, to controversies in the church, to feelings and usages which have passed away, and without the knowledge of which we are constantly in danger of extending to all times, and places, what was of temporary and local application.—We find, too, that some of these books are strongly marked by the genius and character of their respective writers, that the Holy Spirit did not so guide the apostles as to suspend the peculiarities of their minds, and that a knowledge of their feelings, and of the influences under which they were placed, is one of the preparations for understanding their writings. With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit, to seek in the nature of the subject, and the aim of the writer, his true meaning; and, in general, to make use of what is known, for explaining what is difficult, and for discovering new truths.

Need I descend to particulars to prove that the Scriptures demand the exercise of reason? Take, for example, the style in which they generally speak of God, and observe how habitually they apply to him human passions and organs. Recollect the declarations of Christ, that he came not to send peace, but a sword; that unless we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, we have no life in us; that we must hate father and mother, and pluck out the right eye; and a vast number of passages equally bold and unlimited. Recollect the unqualified manner in which it is said of Christians, that they possess all things, know all things, and can do all things. Recollect the verbal contradiction between Paul and James

and the apparent clashing of some parts of Paul's writings with the general doctrines and end of Christianity. I might extend the enumeration indefinitely; and who does not see, that we must limit all these passages by the known attributes of God, of Jesus Christ, and of human nature, and by the circumstances under which they were written, so as to give the language a quite different import from what it would require, had it been applied to different beings, or used in different connexions.

Enough has been said to show, in what sense, we make use of reason in interpreting Scripture. From a variety of possible interpretations, we select that, which accords with the nature of the subject and the state of the writer, with the connexion of the passage, with the general strain of Scripture, with the known character and will of God, and with the obvious and acknowledged laws of nature. In other words, we believe that God never contradicts, in one part of Scripture, what he teaches in another; and never contradicts, in revelation, what he teaches in his works and providence. And we, therefore, distrust every interpretation, which, after deliberate attention, seems repugnant to any established truth. We reason about the Bible precisely as civilians do about the constitution under which we live; who, you know, are accustomed to limit one provision of that venerable instrument by others, and to fix the precise import of its parts, by inquiring into its general spirit, into the intentions of its authors, and into the prevalent feelings, impressions, and circumstances of the time when it was framed. Without these principles of interpretation, we frankly acknowledge, that we cannot defend the divine authority of the Scripture. Deny us this latitude, and we must abandon this book to its enemies.

We do not announce these principles as original, or peculiar to ourselves. All Christians occasionally adopt them, not excepting those, who most vehemently decry them, when they happen to menace some favorite article of their creed. All Christians are compelled to use them in their controversies with infidels. All sects employ them in their warfare with one another. All willingly avail themselves of reason, when it can be pressed into the service of their own party, and only complain of it, when its weapons wound themselves. None reason more frequently than those from whom we differ. It is astonishing what a fabric they rear from a few slight hints about the fall of our first parents; and how ingeniously they extract, from detached passages, mysterious doctrines about the divine nature. We do not blame them for reasoning so abundantly, but for violating the fundamental rules of reasoning, for sacrificing the plain to the obscure, and the general strain of Scripture to a scanty number of insulated texts.

We object strongly to the contemptuous manner in which human reason is often spoken of by our adversaries, because it leads, we believe, to universal scepticism. If reason be so dreadfully darkened by the fall, that its most decisive judgments on religion are unworthy of trust, then Christianity, and even natural theology, must be abandoned; for the existence and veracity of God, and the divine original of Christianity, are conclusions of reason, and must stand or fall with it. If revelation be at war with this faculty, it subverts itself, for the great question of its truth is left by God to be decided at the bar of reason. It is worthy of remark, how nearly the bigot and the skeptic approach. Both would annihilate our confidence in our faculties, and both throw doubt and confusion over every truth. We honor reve-

lation too highly to make it the antagonist of reason, or to believe, that it calls us to renounce our highest powers.

We indeed grant, that the use of reason in religion, is accompanied with danger. But we ask any honest man to look back on the history of the church, and say, whether the renunciation of it be not still more dangerous. Besides, it is a plain fact, that men reason as erroneously on all subjects, as on religion. Who does not know the wild and groundless theories, which have been framed in physical and political science? But who ever supposed, that we must cease to exercise reason on nature and society, because men have erred for ages in explaining them? We grant, that the passions continually, and sometimes fatally, disturb the rational faculty in its inquiries into revelation. The ambitious contrive to find doctrines in the Bible, which favor their love of dominion. The timid and dejected discover there a gloomy system, and the mystical and fanatical, visionary theology. The vicious can find examples of assertions on which to build the hope of late repentance, or of acceptance on easy terms. The falsely refined contrive to light on doctrines which have not been soiled by vulgar handling. But the passions do not distract the reason in religious, any more than in other inquiries, which excite strong and general interest; and this faculty, of consequence, is not to be renounced in religion, unless we are prepared to discard it universally. The true inference from the almost endless errors, which have darkened theology, is, not that we are to neglect and disparage our powers, but to exert them more patiently, circumspectly, uprightly. The worst errors, after all, have sprung up in that church, which proscribes reason, and demands from its members implicit faith. The most pernicious doctrines have been the growth of

the darkest times, when the general credulity encouraged bad men and enthusiasts to broach their dreams and inventions, and to stifle the faint remonstrances of reason, by the menaces of everlasting perdition. Say what we may, God has given us a rational nature, and will call us to account for it. We may let it sleep, but we do so at our peril. Revelation is addressed to us as rational beings. We may wish, in our sloth, that God had given us a system, demanding no labor of comparing, limiting and inferring. But such a system would be at variance with the whole character of our present existence; and it is the part of wisdom to take revelation, as it is given to us, and to interpret it by the help of the faculties, which it everywhere supposes, and on which it is founded.

To the views now given, an objection is commonly urged from the character of God. We are told, that God being infinitely wiser than men, his discoveries will surpass human reason. In a revelation from such a teacher, we ought to expect propositions, which we cannot reconcile with one another, and which may seem to contradict established truths; and it becomes us not to question or explain them away; but to believe, and adore, and to submit our weak and carnal reason to the divine word. To this objection, we have two short answers. We say, first, that it is impossible that a teacher of infinite wisdom, should expose those, whom he would teach, to infinite error. But if once we admit, that propositions, which in their literal sense appear plainly repugnant to one another, or to any known truth, are still to be literally understood and received, what possible limit can we set to the mass of contradictions? What shelter have we from the wildest fanaticism, which can al-

ways quote passages, that, in their literal and obvious sense, give support to its extravagances? How can the Protestant escape from transubstantiation, a doctrine most clearly taught us, if the submission of reason, now contended for, be a duty? How can we even hold fast the truth of revelation, for if one apparent contradiction may be true, so may another, and the proposition, that Christianity is false, though involving inconsistency, may still be a verity?

We answer again, that, if God be infinitely wise, he cannot sport with the understandings of his creatures. A wise teacher discovers his wisdom in adapting himself to the capacities of his pupils, not in perplexing them with what is unintelligible, not in distressing them with apparent contradictions, not in filling them with a sceptical distrust of their own powers. An infinitely wise teacher, who knows the precise extent of our minds, and the best method of enlightening them, will surpass all other instructors in bringing down truth to our apprehension, and in showing its loveliness and harmony. We ought, indeed, to expect occasional obscurity in such a book as the Bible, which was written for past and future ages, as well as for the present. But God's wisdom is a pledge, that whatever is necessary for us, and necessary for salvation, is revealed too plainly to be mistaken and too consistently to be questioned, by a sound and upright mind. It is not the mark of wisdom, to use a unintelligible phraseology, to communicate what is above our capacities, to confuse and unsettle the intellect by appearances of contradiction. We honor our heavenly teacher too much to ascribe to him such a revelation. A revelation is a gift of light. It cannot thicken darkness, and multiply our perplexities.

II. Having thus stated the principles according to which we interpret Scripture, I now proceed to the second great head of this discourse, which is, to state some of the views, which we derive from that sacred book, particularly those which distinguish us from other Christians.

1. In the first place, we believe in the doctrine of God's **UNITY**, or that there is one God, and one only. To this truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed, lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition, that there is one God, seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it, that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom undivided and infinite perfection and dominion belong. We conceive, that these words could have conveyed no other meaning to the simple and uncultivated people, who were set apart to be the depositaries of this great truth, and who were utterly incapable of understanding those hair-breadth distinctions between being and person, which the sagacity of latter ages has discovered. We find no intimation, that this language was to be taken in an unusual sense, or that God's unity was a quite different thing from the unity of other intelligent beings.

We object to the doctrine of the trinity, that whilst acknowledging in words, it subverts in effect, the unity of God. According to this doctrine, there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office,

and neither doing the work of the other; for Son is mediator and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is he conscious of the Son, of taking flesh. Here then we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed. A difference of properties, and acts, and consciousness, which leads us to the belief of different intelligent beings; and if this mark fails us, our whole knowledge fails; we have no proof, that all the agents and persons in the universe are not one and the same mind. When we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we can do nothing more, than represent to ourselves three agents distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities, to those which separate the persons of the trinity; and when common Christians hear these persons spoken of as conversing with each other, loving each other, and performing different acts, how can they help regarding them as different beings, different minds?

We do then, with all earnestness, that we may be reproaching our brethren, protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the trinity. To us, to the apostle and the primitive Christians, there is one God, even the Father! With Jesus we worship the Father, as the only living and true God. We do not wish that any man can read the New Testament, and leave the conviction, that the Father is not God. We have seen our continually appropriating the character of the Father. But now the Father is equally distinguished from Jesus.

God manifested Jesus." Now, how singular and inexplicable is this phraseology, which fills the New Testament! if this title belong equally to Jesus, and if a principal object of this book is to reveal him as God, as partaking equally with the Father in supreme divinity! We challenge our opponents to adduce one passage in the New Testament, where the word God means three persons, where it is not limited to one person, and where, unless turned from its usual sense by the connexion, it does not mean the Father. Can stronger proof be given, that the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead is not a fundamental doctrine of Christianity?

This doctrine, were it true, must, from its difficulty, singularity, and importance, have been laid down with great distinctness, guarded with great care, and stated with all possible precision. But where does this statement appear? From the many passages which treat of God, we look for one, one only, in which we are told, that he is a threefold being, or, that he is three persons, or that he is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. On the contrary, in the New Testament, where, at least, we might expect many express assertions of this nature, God is declared to be one, without the least attempt to prevent the application of the words in their common sense; and he is always spoken of and addressed in the singular number, that is, in language which was universally understood to intend a single person, and to which no other idea could have been attached, without an express declaration. So entirely do the Scriptures abstain from using the trinity, that when our opponents would insert it in our creeds and doxologies, they are compelled to invent a new bible, and to invent forms of word altogether disengaged by scriptural phraseology. This doctrine is liable to misapprehension,

fundamental as this is said to be, and requiring such careful exposition, should be left so undefined and unprotected, to be made out by inference, and to be hunted through distant and detached parts of scripture, this is a difficulty, which, we think, no ingenuity can explain.

We have another difficulty. Christianity, it must be remembered, was planted and grew up amidst sharp-sighted enemies, who overlooked no objectionable part of the system, and who must have fastened with great earnestness on a doctrine involving such apparent contradictions as the trinity. We cannot conceive an opinion, against which the Jews, who prided themselves on an adherence to God's unity, would have raised an equal clamor. Now, how happens it, that in the apostolic writings, which relate so much to objections against Christianity, and to the controversies which grew out of this religion, not one word is said, implying that objections were brought against the gospel from the doctrine of the trinity, not one word is uttered in its defence and explanation, not a word to rescue it from reproach and mistake? This argument has almost the force of demonstration. We are persuaded, that had three divine persons been announced by the first preachers of Christianity, all equal, and all infinite, one of whom was the very Jesus, who had lately died on a cross, this peculiarity of Christianity would have almost absorbed every other, and the great labor of the apostles would have been to repel the continual assault, which it would have awakened. But the fact is, that not a whisper of objection to Christianity, on that account, reaches our ears from the apostolic age. In the epistles we see not a trace of controversy called forth by the trinity.

We have further objections to this doctrine, drawn from its practical influence. We regard it as unfavorable to devotion, by dividing and distracting the mind in its communion with God. It is a great excellence of the doctrine of God's unity, that it offers to us ONE OBJECT of supreme homage, adoration and love, One Infinite Father, one Being of beings, one original and fountain, to whom we may refer all good, in whom all our powers and affections may be concentrated, and whose lovely and venerable nature may pervade all our thoughts. True piety, when directed to an undivided Deity, has a chasteness, a singleness, most favorable to religious awe and love. Now the trinity sets before us three distinct objects of supreme adoration; three infinite persons, having equal claims on our hearts; three divine agents, performing different offices, and to be acknowledged and worshipped in different relations. And is it possible, we ask, that the weak and limited mind of man can attach itself to these with the same power and joy, as to One Infinite Father, the only First Cause, in whom all the blessings of nature and redemption meet as their centre and source? Must not devotion be distracted by the equal and rival claims of three equal persons, and must not the worship of the conscientious, consistent Christian be disturbed by an apprehension lest he withhold from one or another of these his due proportion of homage?

We also think, that the doctrine of the trinity injures devotion, not only by joining to the Father other objects of worship, but by taking from the Father the supreme affection, which is his due, and transferring it to the Son. This is a most important view. That Jesus Christ, if exalted into the infinite Divinity, should be more interesting than the Father, is precisely what might be ex-

pected from history, and from the principles of human nature. Men want an object of worship like themselves, and the great secret of idolatry lies in this propensity. A God, clothed in our form, and feeling our wants and sorrows, speaks to our weak nature more strongly, than a Father in heaven, a pure spirit, invisible, and unapproachable, save by the reflecting and purified mind.—We think too, that the peculiar offices ascribed to Jesus by the popular theology, make him the most attractive person in the Godhead. The Father is the depositary of the justice; the vindicator of the rights, the avenger of the laws of the Divinity. On the other hand, the Son, the brightness of the divine mercy, stands between the incensed Deity and guilty humanity, exposes his meek head to the storms, and his compassionate breast to the sword of the divine justice, bears our whole load of punishment, and purchases with his blood every blessing which descends from heaven. Need we state the effect of these representations, especially on common minds, for whom Christianity was chiefly designed, and whom it seeks to bring to the Father as the loveliest being? We do believe, that the worship of a bleeding, suffering God, tends strongly to absorb the mind, and to draw it from other objects, just as the human tenderness of the Virgin Mary has given her so conspicuous a place in the devotions of the church of Rome. We believe too, that this worship, though attractive, is not most fitted to spiritualize the mind, that it awakens human transports rather than that deep veneration of the moral perfections of God, which is the essence of piety.

2. Having thus given our views of the deity of God, I proceed in the second place to observe, that we believe in the humanity of Jesus Christ. We believe that

Jesus is one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God. We complain of the doctrine of the trinity, that not satisfied with making God three beings, it makes Jesus Christ two beings, and thus introduces infinite confusion into our conceptions of his character. This corruption of Christianity alike repugnant to common sense, and to the general strain of scripture, is a remarkable proof of the power of a false philosophy in disfiguring the simple truth of Jesus.

According to this doctrine, Jesus Christ, instead of being one mind, one conscious intelligent principle, whom we can understand, consists of two souls, two minds; the one divine, the other human; the one weak, the other almighty; the one ignorant, the one omniscient. Now we maintain, that this is to make Christ two beings. To denominate him one person, one being, and yet to suppose him made up of two minds, infinitely different from each other, is to abuse and confound language, and to throw darkness over all our conception of intelligent natures. According to the common doctrine, each of these two minds in Christ has its own consciousness, its own will, its own perceptions. They have in them no common properties. The divine mind feels nothing of the wants and sorrows of the human, and the human mind is entirely removed from the perfection and happiness of the divine. Can you conceive of two beings more diverse, more distinct? We have always thought, that one person was constituted and distinguished by one consciousness. The doctrine, that one and the same person should have two consciousnesses, two wills, two natures, infinitely different from each other, this we consider as notorious delusion, human credulity.

We say, that if a doctrine, so strange, so difficult, so remote from all the previous conceptions of men, be indeed a part and an essential part of revelation, it must be taught with great distinctness, and we ask our brethren to point to some plain, direct passage, where Christ is said to be composed of two minds infinitely different, yet constituting one person. We find none. Other Christians, indeed, tell us, that this doctrine is necessary to the harmony of the Scriptures, that some texts ascribe to Jesus Christ human, and others divine properties, and that to reconcile these, we must suppose two minds, to which these properties may be referred. In other words, for the purpose of reconciling certain difficult passages, which a just criticism can in a great degree, if not wholly, explain, we must invent an hypothesis vastly more difficult, and involving gross absurdity. We are to find our way out of a labyrinth, by a clue, which conducts us into mazes infinitely more inextricable.

Surely if Jesus Christ felt that he consisted of two minds, and that this was a leading feature of his religion, his phraseology respecting himself would have been colored by this peculiarity. The universal language of men is framed upon the idea, that one person is one person, is one mind, and one soul; and when the multitude heard this language from the lips of Jesus, they must have taken it in its usual sense, and must have referred to a single soul all which he spoke, unless expressly instructed to interpret it differently. But where do we find this instruction? Where do you meet, in the New Testament, the phraseology which abounds in Trinitarian books, and which necessarily grows from the doctrine of two natures in Jesus? Where does this divine teacher say, 'I speak as

God, and this as man: this is true only of my human mind; this only of my divine?" Where do we find in the Epistles a trace of this strange phraseology? Nowhere. It was not needed in that day. It was demanded by the errors of a later age.

We believe, then, that Christ is one mind, one being, and, I add, a being distinct from the one God. That Christ is not the one God, not the same being with the Father, is a necessary inference from our former head, in which we saw that the doctrine of three persons in God is a fiction. But on so important a subject, I would add a few remarks. We wish, that those from whom we differ, would weigh one striking fact. Jesus, in his preaching, continually spoke of God. The word was always in his mouth. We ask, does he, by this word, ever mean himself? We say, never. On the contrary, he most plainly distinguishes between God and himself, and so do his disciples. How this is to be reconciled with the idea, that the manifestation of Christ, as God, was a primary object of Christianity, our adversaries must determine.

If we examine the passages in which Jesus is distinguished from God, we shall see, that they not only speak of him as another being, but seem to labor to express his inferiority. He is continually spoken of as the Son of God, sent of God, receiving all his powers from God, working miracles because God was with him, judging justly because God taught him, having claims on our belief, because he was anointed and sealed by God, and as able of himself to do nothing. The New Testament is filled with this language. Now we ask, what impression this language was fitted and intended to make? Courtney, who heard it, have imagined, that Jesus was the very God, to whom he was so in-

distrustfully declared to be inferior; the very being, by whom he was sent, and from whom he professed to have received his message and power? Let it here be remembered, that the human birth, and bodily form, and humble circumstances, and mortal sufferings of Jesus, must all have prepared men to interpret, in the most unqualified manner, the language in which his inferiority to God was declared. Why then was this language used so continually, and without limitation, if Jesus were the Supreme Deity, and if this truth were an essential part of his religion? I repeat it, the human condition and sufferings of Christ, tended strongly to exclude from men's minds the idea of his proper Godhead; and of course, we should expect to find in the New Testament perpetual care and effort to counteract this tendency, to hold him forth as the same being with his Father, if this doctrine were, as is pretended, the soul and centre of his religion. We should expect to find the phraseology of scripture cast into the mould of this doctrine, to hear familiarly of God the Son, of our Lord God Jesus, and to be told, that to us there is one God, even Jesus. But instead of this, the inferiority of Christ pervades the New Testament. It is not only implied in the general phrasology, but repeatedly and decidedly expressed, and unaccompanied with any admonition to prevent its application to his whole nature. Could it then have been the great design of the sacred writers, to exhibit Jesus as the Supreme God?

I am aware that these remarks will be met by two or three texts, in which Christ is called God, and by a class of passages, not very numerous, in which divine properties are said to be ascribed to him. To these we offer one plain answer. We say, that one of the most established and obvious principles of criticism, that

language is to be explained according to the known properties of the subject to which it is applied. Every man knows, that the same words convey very different ideas, when used in relation to different beings. Thus Solomon *built* the temple in a different manner from the architect whom he employed; and God *repents* differently from man. Now, we maintain, that the known properties and circumstances of Christ, his birth, sufferings, and death, his constant habit of speaking of God as a distinct being from himself, his praying to God, his ascribing to God all his power and offices, these acknowledged properties of Christ, we say, oblige us to interpret the comparatively few passages, which are thought to make him the Supreme God, in a manner consistent with his distinct and inferior nature. It is our duty to explain such texts, by the rule which we apply to other texts, in which human beings are called Gods, and are said to be partakers of the divine nature, to know and possess all things, and to be filled with all God's fulness. These latter passages we do not hesitate to modify, and restrain, and turn from the most obvious sense, because this sense is opposed to the known properties of the beings to whom they relate; and we maintain, that we adhere to the same principle, and use no greater latitude, in explaining, as we do, the passages which are thought to support the Godhead of Christ.

The Unitarians profess to derive some important advantages from their mode of viewing Christ. It furnishes them, they tell us, with an infinite atonement, for it shows them an infinite being, suffering for their sins. The confidence with which this fallacy is repeated astonishes us. When pressed with the question, whether they really believe that the infinite and unchangeable God suffered and died on the cross, they acknowledge

that this is not true, but that Christ's human mind alone sustained the pains of death. How have we then an infinite sufferer? This language seems to us an imposition on common minds, and very derogatory to God's justice, as if this attribute could be satisfied by a sophism and a fiction.

We are also told, that Christ is a more interesting object, that his love and mercy are more felt, when he is viewed as the Supreme God, who left his glory to take humanity and to suffer for men. That Trinitarians are strongly moved by this representation, we do not mean to deny; but we think their emotions altogether founded on a misapprehension of their own doctrines. They talk of the second person of the trinity's leaving his glory and his Father's bosom, to visit and save the world. But this second person, being the unchangeable and infinite God, was evidently incapable of parting with the least degree of his perfection and felicity. At the moment of his taking flesh, he was as intimately present with his Father as before, and equally with his Father filled heaven, and earth, and immensity. This Trinitarians acknowledge; and still they profess to be touched and overwhelmed by the amazing humiliation of this immutable being! But not only does their doctrine, when fully explained, reduce Christ's humiliation to a fiction, it almost wholly destroys the impressions with which his cross ought to be viewed. According to their doctrine, Christ was, comparatively, no sufferer at all. It is true, his human mind suffered; but this, they tell us, was an infinitely small part of Jesus, bearing no more proportion to his whole nature, than a single hair of our heads to the whole body, or than a drop to the ocean. The divine mind of Christ, that which was most properly himself, was infinitely

happy, at the very moment of the suffering of his humanity. Whilst hanging on the cross, he was the happiest being in the universe, as happy as the infinite Father; so that his pains, compared with his felicity, were nothing. This Trinitarians do, and must acknowledge. It follows necessarily from the immutableness of the divine nature, which they ascribe to Christ; so that their system, justly viewed, robs his death of interest, weakens our sympathy with his sufferings, and is, of all others, most unfavorable to a love of Christ, founded on a sense of his sacrifices for mankind. We esteem our own views to be vastly more affecting. It is our belief, that Christ's humiliation was real and entire, that the whole Saviour, and not a part of him, suffered, that his crucifixion was a scene of deep and unmixed agony. As we stand round his cross, our minds are not distracted, nor our sensibility weakened, by contemplating him as composed of incongruous and infinitely differing minds, and as having a balance of infinite felicity. We recognise in the dying Jesus but one mind. This, we think, renders his sufferings, and his patience and love in bearing them, incomparably more impressive and affecting, than the system we oppose.

3. Having thus given our belief on two great points, namely, that there is one God, and that Jesus Christ is a being distinct from, and inferior to God, I now proceed to another point on which we lay still greater stress. We believe in the *moral perfection of God*. We consider no part of theology so important as that which treats of God's moral character; and we value our views of Christianity chiefly, as they assert his amiable and venerable attributes.

It may be said, that in regard to this subject, all Christians agree, and all ascribe to the Supreme Being, infi-

nite justice, goodness, and happiness. We reply, that it is very possible to speak of God magnificently, and to think of him meanly; to apply to his person high-sounding epithets, and to his government, principles which make him odious. The Heathens called Jupiter the greatest and the best; but his history was black with cruelty and lust. We cannot judge of men's real ideas of God, by their general language, for in all ages, they have hoped to soothe the Deity by adulation. We must inquire into their particular views of his purposes, of the principles of his administration, and of his disposition towards his creatures.

We conceive that Christians have generally leaned towards a very injurious view of the Supreme Being. They have too often felt, as if he were raised, by his greatness and sovereignty, above the principles of morality, above those eternal laws of equity and rectitude, to which all other beings are subjected. We believe, that no being is the sense of right so strong, so omnipotent, as in God. We believe that his almighty power is entirely submitted to his perceptions of rectitude, and this is the ground of our piety. It is not because he is our Creator merely, but because he created us for good and holy purposes; it is not because his will is irresistible, but because his will is the perfection of virtue, that we pay him allegiance. We cannot bow before a being, however great and powerful, who governs ~~meritically~~. We respect nothing but excellence, whether on earth, or in heaven. We venerate not the loftiness of God's throne, but the equity and goodness in which it is established.

We believe that God is infinitely good, kind, benevolent, in the proper sense of these words; good in disposition, as well as in acts; good, notwithstanding a few, but to

all good to every individual, as well as to the general system.

We believe, too, that God is just; but we never forget, that his justice is the justice of a good being, dwelling in the same mind, and acting in harmony, with perfect benevolence. By this attribute, we understand God's infinite regard to virtue or moral worth, expressed in a moral government; that is, in giving excellent and equitable laws, and in conferring such rewards, and inflicting such punishments, as are best fitted to secure their observance. God's justice has for its end the highest virtue of the creation, and it punishes for this end alone, and thus it coincides with benevolence; for virtue and happiness, though not the same, are inseparably connected.

God's justice thus viewed, appears to us to be in perfect harmony with his mercy. According to the prevalent systems of theology, these attributes are so discordant and jarring, that to reconcile them is the hardest task, and the most wonderful achievement, of infinite wisdom. To us they seem to be intimate friends, always at peace, breathing the same spirit, and seeking the same end. By God's mercy, we understand not a blind instinctive compassion, which forgives without reflection, and without regard to the interests of virtue. This we acknowledge, would be incompatible with justice, and also with enlightened benevolence. God's mercy, as we understand it, desires strongly the happiness of the guilty, but only through their penitence. It has a regard to character as truly as his justice. It defers punishment, and suffers long, that the sinner may return to his duty, but leaves the impenitent and unyielding, to the fearful retribution threatened in God's word.

To give our views of God, in one word, we believe in his Parental character. We ascribe to him, not only the name, but the dispositions and principles of a father. We believe that he has a father's concern for his creatures, a father's desire for their improvement, a father's equity in proportioning his commands to their powers, a father's joy in their progress, a father's readiness to receive the penitent, and a father's justice for the incorrigible. We look upon this world as a place of education, in which he is training men by prosperity and adversity, by aids and obstructions, by conflicts of reason and passion, by motives to duty and temptations to sin, by a various discipline suited to free and moral beings, for union with himself, and for a sublime and ever growing virtue in heaven.

Now we object to the systems of religion, which prevail among us, that they are adverse, in a greater or less degree, to these purifying, comforting, and honorable views of God, that they take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute for him a being, whom we cannot love if we would, and whom we ought not to love if we could. We object, particularly on this ground, to that system, which arrogates to itself the name of Orthodoxy, and which is now industriously propagated through our country. This system indeed takes various shapes, but in all it casts dishonor on the Creator. According to its old and genuine form, it teaches, that God brings us into life wholly depraved, so that under the innocent features of our childhood, is hidden a nature averse to all good and propense to all evil, a nature, which exposes us to God's displeasure and wrath, even before we have acquired power to understand our duties, or to reflect upon our actions. According to a more modern exposition, it teaches, that we

came from the hands of our Maker with such a constitution and are placed under such influences and circumstances, as to render certain and infallible the total depravity of every human being, from the first moment of his moral agency; and it also teaches, that the offence of the child, who brings into life this ceaseless tendency to unmixed crime, exposes him to the sentence of everlasting damnation. Now, according to the plainest principles of morality, we maintain, that a natural constitution of the mind, unfailingly disposing it to evil and to evil alone, would absolve it from guilt; that to give existence under this condition would argue unspeakable cruelty, and that to punish the sin of this unhappily constituted child with endless ruin, would be a wrong unparalleled by the most merciless despotism.

This system also teaches, that God selects from this corrupt mass a number to be saved, and plucks them, by a special influence, from the common ruin; that the rest of mankind, though left without that special grace which their conversion requires, are commanded to repent under penalty of aggravated wo; and that forgiveness is promised them on terms, which their very constitution infallibly disposes them to reject, and in rejecting which they awfully enhance the punishments of hell. These profers of forgiveness and exhortations of amendment, to beings born under a blighting curse, fill our minds with a horror, which we want words to express.

That this religious system does not produce all the effects on character, which might be anticipated, we most joyfully admit. It is often, very often, counteracted by nature, conscience, common sense, by the general strain of scripture, by the mild example, and precepts of Christ, and by the many positive declarations of

God's universal kindness, and perfect equity. But still we think that we see its unhappy influence. It tends to discourage the timid, to give excuses to the bad, to feed the vanity of the fanatical, and to offer shelter to the bad feelings of the malignant. By shocking, as it does the fundamental principles of morality, and by exhibiting a severe and partial Deity, it tends strongly to pervert the moral faculty, to form a gloomy, forbidding, and servile religion, and to lead men to substitute censoriousness, bitterness, and persecution, for a tender and impartial charity. We think, too, that this system, which begins with degrading human nature, may be expected to end in pride; for pride grows out of a consciousness of high distinctions, however obtained, and no distinction is so great as that, which is made between the elected and abandoned of God.

The false and dishonorable views of God, which have now been stated, we feel ourselves bound to resist unceasingly. Other errors we can pass over with comparative indifference. But we ask our opponents to leave to us a God, worthy of our love and trust, in whom our moral sentiments may delight, in whom our weaknesses and sorrows may find refuge. We cling to the divine perfections. We meet them everywhere in creation, we read them in the scriptures, we see a lovely image of them in Jesus Christ; and gratitude, love and veneration call on us to assert them. Reaproached, as we often are, by men, it is our consolation and happiness, that one of our chief offences is the zeal with which we vindicate the dishonored goodness and rectitude of God.

4. Having thus spoken of the unity of God; of the unity of Jesus, and his inferiority to God; and of the perfections of the divine character, I now proceed

to give our views of the mediation of Christ and of the purposes of his mission. With regard to the great object, which Jesus came to accomplish, there seems to be no possibility of mistake. We believe, that he was sent by the Father to effect a moral, or spiritual deliverance of mankind ; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity and happiness. We believe, too, that he accomplishes this sublime purpose by a variety of methods ; by his instructions respecting God's unity, parental character, and moral government, which are admirably fitted to reclaim the world from idolatry and impiety, to the knowledge, love, and obedience of the Creator ; by his promises of pardon to the penitent, and of divine assistance to those, who labor for progress in moral excellence ; by the light which he has thrown on the path of duty ; by his own spotless example, in which the loveliness and sublimity of virtue shine forth to warm and quicken, as well as guide us to perfection ; by his threatenings against incorrigible guilt ; by his glorious discoveries of immortality ; by his sufferings and death ; by that signal event, the resurrection, which powerfully bore witness to his divine mission, and brought down to men's senses a future life ; by his continual intercession, which obtains for us spiritual aid and blessings ; and by the power with which he is invested of raising the dead, judging the world, and conferring the everlasting rewards, promised to the faithful.

We have no desire to conceal the fact, that a difference of opinion exists among us, in regard to an interesting part of Christ's mediation ; I mean, in regard to the precise influence of his death, on our forgiveness. Many suppose, that this event contributes to our pardon, as it was a principal means of confirming his religion,

and of giving it a power over the mind ; in other words, that it procures forgiveness by leading to that repentance and virtue, which is the great and only condition on which forgiveness is bestowed. Many of us are dissatisfied with this explanation, and think that the scriptures ascribe the remission of sins to Christ's death, with an emphasis so peculiar, that we ought to consider this event as having a special influence in removing punishment, though the scriptures may not reveal the way, in which it contributes to this end.

Whilst, however, we differ in explaining the connexion between Christ's death and human forgiveness, a connexion, which we all gratefully acknowledge, we agree in rejecting many sentiments, which prevail in regard to his mediation. The idea, which is conveyed to common minds by the popular system, that Christ's death has an influence in making God placable or merciful, in awakening his kindness towards men, we reject with strong disapprobation. We are happy to find, that this very dishonorable notion is disowned by intelligent Christians of that class from which we differ. We recollect however, that not long ago, it was common to hear of Christ, as having died to appease God's wrath, and to pay the debt of sinners to his inflexible justice ; and we have a strong persuasion, that the language of popular religious books, and the common mode of stating the doctrine of Christ's mediation, still communicate very degrading views of God's character. They give to multitudes the impression, that the death of Jesus produces a change in the mind of God towards man, and that in this its efficacy chiefly consists. No error seems to us more pernicious. We can endure no shade over the pure goodness of God. We earnestly maintain, that Jesus, instead of calling

forth in any way or degree, the mercy of the Father, was sent by that mercy, to be our Saviour; that he is nothing to the human race, but what he is by God's appointment; that he communicates nothing but what God empowers him to bestow; that our Father in heaven is originally, essentially and eternally placable, and disposed to forgive; and that his unborrowed, undriven, and unchangeable love, is the only fountain of what flows to us through his Son. We conceive, that Jesus is dishonored, not glorified, by ascribing to him an influence, which clouds the splendor of divine benevolence.

We farther agree in rejecting, as unscriptural and absurd, the explanation given by the popular system, of the manner in which Christ's death procures forgiveness for men. This system used to teach as its fundamental principle, that man, having sinned against an infinite being, has contracted infinite guilt, and is consequently exposed to an infinite penalty. We believe however, that this reasoning, if reasoning it may be called, which overlooks the obvious maxim, that the guilt of a being must be proportioned to his nature and powers, has fallen into disuse. Still the system teaches, that sin, of whatever degree, exposes to endless punishment, and that the whole human race, being infallibly involved by their nature in sin, owe this awful penalty to the justice of their Creator. It teaches, that this penalty cannot be remitted, in consistency with the honor of the divine law, unless a substitute be found to endure it or to suffer an equivalent. It also teaches, that, from the nature of the case, no substitute is adequate to this work, save the infinite God himself; and accordingly, God, in his second person, took on him human nature, that he might

pay to his own justice the debt of punishment incurred by men, and might thus reconcile forgiveness with the claims and threatenings of his law. Such is the prevalent system. Now, to us, this doctrine seems to carry on its front, strong marks of absurdity, and we maintain that Christianity ought not to be encumbered with it, unless it be laid down in the New Testament fully and expressly. We ask our adversaries, then, to point to some plain passages where it is taught. We ask for one text, in which we are told that God took human nature, that he might make an infinite satisfaction to his own justice; for one text, which tells us, that human guilt requires an infinite substitute; that Christ's sufferings owe their efficacy to their being borne by an infinite being; or that his divine nature gives infinite value to the sufferings of the human. Not *one word* of this description can we find in the scriptures; not a text, which even hints at these strange doctrines. They are altogether, we believe, the fictions of theologians. Christianity is in no degree responsible for them. We are astonished at their prevalence. What can be plainer, than that God cannot, in any sense, be a sufferer, or bear a penalty in the room of his creatures? How dishonorable to him is the supposition, that his justice is now so severe, as to exact infinite punishment for the sins of frail and feeble men, and now so easy and yielding, as to accept the limited pains of Christ's human soul, as a full equivalent for the endless woes due from the world? How plain is it also, according to this doctrine, that God, instead of being plenteous in forgiveness, never forgives; for it seems absurd to speak of men as forgiven, when their whole punishment, or an equivalent to it, is borne by a substitute? A scheme

more fitted to obscure the brightness of Christianity and the mercy of God, or less suited to give comfort to a guilty and troubled mind, could not, we think, be easily framed.

We believe too, that this system is unfavorable to the character. It naturally leads men to think, that Christ came to change God's mind, rather than their own ; that the highest object of his mission, was to avert punishment, rather than to communicate holiness ; and that a large part of religion consists in disparaging good works and human virtue, for the purpose of magnifying the value of Christ's vicarious sufferings. In this way, a sense of the infinite importance and indispensable necessity of personal improvement is weakened, and high sounding praises of Christ's cross seem often to be substituted for obedience to his precepts. For ourselves, we have not so learned Jesus. Whilst we gratefully acknowledge, that he came to rescue us from punishment, we believe, that he was sent on a still nobler errand, namely, to deliver us from sin itself, and to form us to a sublime and heavenly virtue. We regard him as a Saviour, chiefly as he is the light, physician, and guide of the dark, diseased, and wandering mind. No influence in the universe seems to us so glorious, as that over the character ; and no redemption so worthy of thankfulness, as the restoration of the soul to purity. Without this, pardon, were it possible, would be of little value. Why pluck the sinner from hell, if a hell be left to burn in his own breast ? Why raise him to heaven, if he remain a stranger to its sanctity and love ? With these impressions, we are accustomed to value the gospel chiefly, as it abounds in effectual aids, motives, excitements to a generous and divine virtue. In this virtue, as in a common centre, we see all its doctrines,

precepts, promises meet ; and we believe, that faith in this religion is of no worth, and contributes nothing to salvation, any farther than as it uses these doctrines, precepts, promises, and the whole life, character, sufferings, and triumphs of Jesus, as the means of purifying the mind, of changing it into the likeness of his celestial excellence.

5. Having thus stated our views of the highest object of Christ's mission, that it is the recovery of men to virtue, or holiness, I shall now, in the last place, give our views of the nature of christian virtue, or true holiness. We believe that all virtue has its foundation in the moral nature of man, that is, in conscience, or his sense of duty, and in the power of forming his temper and life according to conscience. We believe that these moral faculties are the grounds of responsibility, and the highest distinctions of human nature, and that no act is praiseworthy, any farther than it springs from their exertion. We believe, that no dispositions infused into us without our own moral activity, are of the nature of virtue, and therefore, we reject the doctrine of irresistible divine influence on the human mind, moulding it into goodness, as marble is hewn into a statue. Such goodness, if this word may be used, would not be the object of moral approbation, any more than the instinctive affections of inferior animals, or the constitutional amiableness of human beings.

By these remarks, we do not mean to deny the importance of God's aid or Spirit ; but by his Spirit, we mean a moral, illuminating, and persuasive influence, not physical, not compulsory, not involving a necessity of virtue. We object, strongly, to the idea of many Christians respecting man's impotence and God's irresistible agency on the heart, believing that they subvert

our responsibility and the laws of our moral nature, that they make men machines, that they cast on God the blame of all evil deeds, that they discourage good minds, and inflate the fanatical with wild conceits of immediate and sensible inspiration.

Among the virtues, we give the first place to the love of God. We believe, that this principle is the true end and happiness of our being, that we were made for union with our Creator, that his infinite perfection is the only sufficient object and true resting place for the insatiable desires and unlimited capacities of the human mind, and that without him, our noblest sentiments, admiration, veneration, hope, and love, would wither and decay. We believe too, that the love of God is not only essential to happiness, but to the strength and perfection of all the virtues; that conscience, without the sanction of God's authority and retributive justice, would be a weak director; that benevolence, unless nourished by communion with his goodness, and encouraged by his smile, could not thrive amidst the selfishness and thanklessness of the world; and that self-government, without a sense of the divine inspection, would hardly extend beyond an outward and partial purity. God, as he is essentially goodness, holiness, justice, and virtue, so he is the life, motive and sustainer of virtue in the human soul.

But whilst we earnestly inculcate the love of God, we believe that great care is necessary to distinguish it from counterfeits. We think that much, which is called piety, is worthless. Many have fallen into the error, that there can be no excess in feelings, which have God for their object; and, distrusting as coldness that self-possession, without which virtue and devotion lose all their dignity, they have abandoned themselves to ex-

travagances, which have brought contempt on piety. Most certainly, if the love of God be that, which often bears its name; the less we have of it, the better. If religion be the shipwreck of understanding, we cannot keep too far from it. On this subject, we always speak plainly. We cannot sacrifice our reason to the reputation of zeal. We owe it to truth and religion, to maintain, that fanaticism, partial insanity, sudden impressions, and ungovernable transports, are anything, rather than piety.

We conceive, that the true love of God is a moral sentiment, founded on a clear perception, and consisting in a high esteem and veneration, of his moral perfections. Thus, it perfectly coincides, and is in fact the same thing, with the love of virtue, rectitude, and goodness. You will easily judge then, what we esteem the surest and only decisive signs of piety. We stress on strong excitements. We esteem him, ~~and~~ him only a pious man, who practically conform God's moral perfections and government; who sh. his delight in God's benevolence, by loving and serving his neighbour; his delight in God's justice, by being resolutely upright; his sense of God's purity, by regulating his thoughts, imagination, and desires; and whose conversation, business, and domestic life are sw. by a regard to God's presence and authority. In all things else men may deceive themselves. Disordered nerves may give them strange sights, and sounds, and impressions. Texts of scripture may come to them as from Heaven. Their whole souls may be moved, and their confidence in God's favor be undoubting. But in all this there is no religion. The question is, do they love God's commands, in which his character is fully

expressed, and give up to these their habits and passions? Without this, ecstasy is a mockery. One surrender of desire to God's will, is worth a thousand transports. We do not judge of the bent of men's minds by their raptures, any more than we judge of the natural direction of a tree, during a storm. We rather suspect loud profession, for we have observed, that deep feeling is generally noiseless, and least seeks display.

We would not, by these remarks, be understood as wishing to exclude from religion warmth, and even transport. We honor, and highly value true religious sensibility. We believe, that Christianity is intended to act powerfully on our whole nature, on the heart, as well as the understanding and the conscience. We conceive of heaven as a state, where the love of God will be exalted into an unbounded fervor and joy; and we desire, in our pilgrimage here, to drink into the spirit of that better world. But we think, that religious warmth is only to be valued, when it springs naturally from an improved character, when it comes unforced, when it is the recompence of obedience, when it is the warmth of a mind which understands God by being like him, and when, instead of disordering, it exalts the understanding, invigorates conscience, gives a pleasure to common duties, and is seen to exist in connexion with cheerfulness, judiciousness, and a reasonable frame of mind. When we observe a fervor, called religious, in men whose general character expresses little refinement and elevation, and whose piety seems at war with reason, we pay it little respect. We honor religion, too much to give its sacred name to a severish, forced, fluctuating zeal, which has little power over the life.

Another important branch of virtue, we believe to be love to Christ. The greatness of the work of Jesus, the spirit with which he executed it, and the sufferings which he bore for our salvation, we feel to be strong claims on our gratitude and veneration. We see in nature no beauty to be compared with the loveliness of his character, nor do we find on earth a benefactor, to whom we owe an equal debt. We read his history with delight, and learn from it the perfection of our nature. We are particularly touched by his death, which was endured for our redemption, and by that strength of charity, which triumphed over his pains. His resurrection is the foundation of our hope of immortality. His intercession gives us boldness to draw nigh to the throne of grace, and we look up to heaven with new desire, when we think, that if we follow him here, we shall there see his benignant countenance and enjoy his friendship forever.

I need not express to you our views on the subject of the benevolent virtues. We attach such importance to these, that we are sometimes reproached with exalting them above piety. We regard the spirit of love, charity, meekness, forgiveness, liberality, and beneficence, as the badge and distinction of Christians, as the brightest image we can bear of God, as the best proof of piety. On this subject, I need not, and cannot enlarge; but there is one branch of benevolence, which I ought not to pass over in silence, because we think that we conceive of it more highly and justly, than many of our brethren. I refer to the duty of candor, charitable judgment, especially towards those who differ in religious opinion. We think, that in nothing have Christians so widely departed from their religion, as in this

particular. We read with astonishment and horror, the history of the church ; and sometimes when we look back on the fires of persecution, and on the zeal of Christians, in building up walls of separation, and in giving up one another to perdition, we feel as if we were reading the records of an infernal, rather than a heavenly kingdom. An enemy to every religion, if asked to describe a Christian, would, with some show of reason, depict him as an idolater of his own distinguishing opinions, covered with badges of party, shutting his eyes on the virtues and his ears on the arguments of his opponents, arrogating all excellence to his own sect and all saving power to his own creed, sheltering under the name of pious zeal the love of domination, the conceit of infallibility, and the spirit of intolerance, and trampling on men's rights under the pretence of saving their souls.

We can hardly conceive of a plainer obligation on beings of our frail and fallible nature, who are instructed in the duty of candid judgment, than to abstain from condemning men of apparent conscientiousness and sincerity, who are chargeable with no crime but that of differing from us in the interpretation of the scriptures, and differing too, on topics of great and acknowledged obscurity. We are astonished at the hardihood of those, who, with Christ's warnings sounding in their ears, take on them the responsibility of making creeds for his church, and cast out professors of virtuous lives for imagined errors, for the guilt of thinking for themselves. We know that zeal for truth, is the cover for this usurpation of Christ's prerogative ; but we think that zeal for truth, as it is called, is very suspicious, except in men, whose capacities and advantages, whose patient

deliberation, and whose improvements in humility, mildness, and candor, give them a right to hope, that their views are more just than those of their neighbours. Much of what passes for a zeal for truth, we look upon with little respect, for it often appears to thrive most luxuriantly where other virtues shoot up thinly and feebly; and we have no gratitude for those reformers, who would force upon us a doctrine, which has not sweetened their own tempers, or made them better men than their neighbours.

We are accustomed to think much of the difficulties attending religious inquiries; difficulties springing from the slow developement of our minds, from the power of early impressions, from the state of society, from human authority, from the general neglect of the reasoning powers, from the want of just principles of criticism and of important helps in interpreting scripture, and from various other causes. We find, that on no subject have men, and even good men, engrafted so many strange conceits, wild theories, and fictions of fancy, as on religion; and remembering, as we do, that we ourselves are sharers of the common frailty, we dare not assume infallibility in the treatment of our fellow Christians, or encourage in common Christians, who have little time for investigation, the habit of denouncing and contemning other denominations, perhaps more enlightened and virtuous than their own. Charity, forbearance, a delight in the virtues of different sects, a backwardness to censure and condemn, these are virtues, which, however poorly practised by us, we admire and recommend, and we would rather join ourselves to the church in which they abound, than to any other communion, however elated with the belief of its own orthodoxy,

however strict in guarding its creed, however burning with zeal against imagined error.

I have thus given the distinguishing views of those Christians in whose names I have spoken. We have embraced this system, not hastily or lightly, but after much deliberation, and we hold it fast, not merely because we believe it to be true, but because we regard it as purifying truth, as a doctrine according to godliness, as able to 'work mightily' and to 'bring forth fruit' in them who believe. That we wish to spread it, we have no desire to conceal; but we think, that we wish its diffusion, because we regard it as more friendly to practical piety and pure morals, than the opposite doctrines, because it gives clearer and nobler views of duty, and stronger motives to its performance, because it recommends religion at once to the understanding and the heart, because it asserts the lovely and venerable attributes of God, because it tends to restore the benevolent spirit of Jesus to his divided and afflicted church, and because it cuts off every hope of God's favor, except that which springs from practical conformity to the life and precepts of Christ. We see nothing in our views to give offence, save their purity, and it is their purity, which makes us seek and hope their extension through the world.

My friend and brother;—You are this day to take upon you important duties; to be clothed with an office, which the Son of God did not disdain; to devote yourself to that Religion, which the most hallowed lips have preached, and the most precious blood sealed. We trust that you will bring to this work a willing mind, a firm purpose, a martyr's spirit, a readiness to toil and

suffer for the truth, a devotion of your best powers to the interests of piety and virtue. I have spoken of the doctrines, which you will probably preach; but I do not mean, that you are to give yourself to controversy. You will remember, that good practice is the end of preaching, and will labor to make your people holy livers, rather than skilful disputants. Be ~~cautious~~, lest the desire of defending what you deem true, and of repelling reproach and misrepresentation, turn you aside from your great business, which is to fix in men's minds a living conviction of the obligation, sublimity and happiness of christian virtue. The best way to vindicate your sentiments, is to show, in your preaching and life, their intimate connexion with christian morals, with a high and delicate sense of duty, with candor towards your opposers, with inflexible integrity, and with an habitual reverence for God. If any light can pierce and scatter the clouds of prejudice, it is that of a pure example. My brother, may your life preach more loudly than your lips. Be to this people a pattern of all good works, and may your instructions derive authority from a well grounded belief in your hearers, that you speak from the heart, that you preach from experience, that the truth which you dispense has wrought powerfully in your own heart, that God, and Jesus, and heaven are not merely words on your lips, but most affecting realities to your mind, and springs of hope and consolation, and strength, in all your trials. Thus laboring, may you reap abundantly, and have a testimony of your faithfulness, not only in your own conscience, but in the esteem, love, virtues, and improvement of your people.

To all who hear me, I would say, with the apostle, Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Do not

brethren, shrink from the duty of searching God's word for yourselves through fear of human censure and denunciation. Do not think that you may innocently follow the opinions, which prevail around you, without investigation, on the ground, that Christianity is now so purified from errors, as to need no laborious research. There is much reason to believe, that Christianity is at this moment dishonored by gross and cherished corruptions. If you remember the darkness, which hung over the gospel for ages; if you consider the impure union, which still subsists in almost every christian country between the church, and the state, and which enlists men's selfishness and ambition, on the side of established error; if you recollect in what degree the spirit of intolerance has checked free inquiry, not only before, but since the reformation; you will see that Christianity cannot have freed itself from all the human inventions, which disfigured it under the papal tyranny. No. Much stubble is yet to be burnt; much rubbish to be removed; many gaudy decorations, which a false taste has hung around Christianity, must be swept away; and the earth-born fogs, which have long shrouded it, must be scattered, before this divine fabric will rise before us in its native and awful majesty, in its harmonious proportions, in its mild and celestial splendors. This glorious reformation in the church, we hope, under God's blessing, from the progress of the human intellect, from the moral progress of society, from the consequent decline of prejudice and bigotry, and, though last not least, from the subversion of human authority in matters of religion, from the fall of those hierarchies, and other human institutions, by which the minds of individuals are oppressed under the weight of numbers,

and spiritual dominion is perpetuated in the protestant church. Our earnest prayer to God is, that he will overturn, and overturn, and overturn the strong holds of spiritual usurpation, until he shall come, whose right it is to rule the minds of men; that the conspiracy of ages against the liberty of Christians may be brought to an end; that the servile assent, so long yielded to human creeds, may give place to honest and devout inquiry into the scriptures; and that Christianity, thus purified from error, may put forth its almighty energy, and prove itself, by its ennobling influence on the mind, to be indeed 'the power of God unto salvation.'

DISCOURSE

ON THE EVIDENCES OF REVEALED RELIGION, DELIVERED BEFORE
THE UNIVERSITY IN CAMBRIDGE, AT THE DUDLEIAN LECTURE,
14 MARCH, 1821.

JOHN III. 2.

THE SAME CAME TO JESUS BY NIGHT, AND SAID UNTO HIM, RABBI, WE KNOW THAT THOU ART A TEACHER COME FROM GOD: FOR NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES THAT THOU DOEST, EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM.'

THE evidences of revealed religion are the subject of this lecture, a subject of great extent, as well as of vast importance. In discussing it, an immense variety of learning has been employed, and all the powers of the intellect been called forth. History, metaphysics, ancient learning, criticism, ethical science, and the science of human nature, have been summoned to the controversy, and have brought important contributions to the Christian cause. To condense into one discourse what scholars and great men have written on this point, is impossible, even if it were desirable; and I have stated the extent of speculation into which our subject has led, not because I propose to give an abstract of others' labors, but because I wish you to understand, that the topic is one not easily despatched, and because I would invite you to follow me in a discussion, which will require concentrated and continued attention. A subject more worthy of attention, than the claims of that religion, which was impressed on our childhood, and which is

acknowledged to be the only firm foundation of the hope of immortality, cannot be presented; and our minds must want the ordinary seriousness of human nature, if it cannot arrest us.

That Christianity has been opposed, is a fact implied in the establishment of this lecture. That it has had adversaries of no mean intellect, you know. I propose in this discourse to make some remarks on what seems to me the great objection to Christianity, on the general principle on which its evidences rest, and on some of its particular evidences.

The great objection to Christianity, the only one which has much influence at the present day, meets us at the very threshold. We cannot, if we would, evade it, for it is founded on a primary and essential attribute of this religion. The objection is often felt than expressed, and amounts to this,—that miracles are incredible, and that the supernatural character of an alleged fact is proof enough of its falsehood. So strong is this propensity to doubt of departures from the order of nature, that there are sincere Christians, who incline to rest their religion wholly on its internal evidence, and to overlook the outward extraordinary interposition of God, by which it was at first established. But the difficulty cannot in this way be evaded; for Christianity is not only confirmed by miracles, but is in itself, in its very essence, a miraculous religion. It is not a system, which the human mind might have gathered, in the ordinary exercise of its powers, from the ordinary course of nature. Its doctrines, especially those which relate to its founder, claim for it a distinction of being a supernatural provision for the recovery of the human race. So that the objection which I have stated still

presses upon us, and if it be well grounded, it is fatal to Christianity.

It is proper then to begin the discussion, with inquiring, whence the disposition to discredit miracles springs, and how far it is rational. A preliminary remark of some importance is, that this disposition is not a necessary part of principle of our mental constitution, like the disposition to trace effects to adequate causes. We are indeed so framed, as to expect a continuance of that order of nature which we have uniformly experienced; but not so framed as to revolt at alleged violations of that order, and to account them impossible or absurd. On the contrary, men at large discover a strong and incurable propensity to believe in miracles. Almost all histories, until within the two last centuries, reported seriously supernatural facts. Skepticism, as to miracles, is comparatively a new thing, if we except the epicurean or atheistical sect among the ancients; and so far from being founded in human nature, it is resisted by an almost infinite preponderance of belief on the other side.

Whence then has this skepticism sprung? It may be explained by two principal causes. 1. It is now an acknowledged fact, among enlightened men, that in past times and in our own, a strong disposition has existed and still exists to admit miracles without examination. Human credulity is found to have devoured nothing more eagerly than reports of prodigies. Now it is argued, that we discover here a principle of human nature, namely, the love of the supernatural and marvellous, which accounts sufficiently for the belief of miracles, wherever we find it; and that it is consequently unnecessary and philosophical to seek for other causes, and especially to admit that most improbabl

one, the actual existence of miracles. This sweeping conclusion is a specimen of that rash habit of generalizing, which rather distinguishes our times, and shows that philosophical reasoning has made fewer advances than we are apt to boast. It is true, that there is a principle of credulity as to prodigies in a considerable part of society, a disposition to believe without due scrutiny. But this principle, like every other in our nature, has its limits; acts according to fixed laws; is not omnipotent; cannot make the eyes see, and the ears hear, and the understanding credit delusions, under all imaginable circumstances; but requires the concurrence of various circumstances and of other principles of our nature in order to its operation. For example, the belief of spectral appearances has been very common; but under what circumstances and in what state of mind has it occurred? Do men see ghosts in broad day, and amidst cheerful society? Or in solitary places; in grave yards; in twilights or mists, where outward objects are so undefined, as easily to take a form from imagination; and in other circumstances favorable to terror, and associated with the delusion in question? The principle of credulity is as regular in its operation, as any other principle of the mind; and is so dependent on circumstances and so restrained and checked by other parts of human nature, that sometimes the most obstinate incredulity is found in that very class of people, whose easy belief on other occasions moves our contempt. It is well known, for example, that the efficacy of the vaccine inoculation has been encountered with much more unyielding skepticism among the vulgar, than among the improved; and in general, it may be affirmed, that the credulity of the ignorant operates under the control of their strongest passions and im-

pressions, and that no class of society yield a slower assent to positions, which manifestly subvert their old modes of thinking and most settled prejudices. It is then very unphilosophical to assume this principle as an explanation of all ~~miracles~~ whatever. I grant that the fact, that accounts of supernatural agency so generally prove false, is a reason for looking upon them with peculiar distrust. Miracles ought on this account to be sifted more than common facts. But if we find, that a belief in a series of supernatural works has occurred under circumstances very different from those, under which false prodigies have been received, under circumstances most unfavorable to the operation of credulity; then this belief cannot be resolved into the common causes, which have blinded men in regard to supernatural agency. We must look for other causes, and if none can be found but the actual existence of the miracles, then true philosophy binds us to believe them. I close this head with observing, that the propensity of men to believe in what is strange and miraculous, though a presumption against particular miracles, is not a presumption against miracles universally, but rather the reverse; for great principles of human nature have generally a foundation in truth, and one explanation of this propensity so common to mankind is obviously this, that in the earlier ages of the human race, miraculous interpositions, suited to man's infant state, were not uncommon, and, being the most striking facts of human history, they spread through all future times a belief and expectation of miracles.

I proceed now to the second cause of the skepticism in regard to supernatural agency, which has grown up, especially among the more improved, in later times. These later times are distinguished, as you well know,

by successful researches into nature; and the discoveries of science have continually added strength to that great principle, that the phenomena of the universe are regulated by general and permanent laws, or that the Author of the universe exerts his power according to an established order. Nature, the more it is explored, is found to be uniform. We observe an unbroken succession of causes and effects. Many phenomena, once denominated irregular, and ascribed to supernatural agency, are found to be connected with preceding circumstances, as regularly as the most common events. The comet, we learn, observes the same attraction, as the sun and planets. When a new phenomenon now occurs, no one thinks it miraculous, but believes, that when better understood, it may be reduced to laws already known, or is an example of a law not yet investigated.

Now this increasing acquaintance with the uniformity of nature begets a distrust of alleged violations of it, and a rational distrust too; for while many causes of mistake in regard to alleged miracles may be assigned, there is but one adequate cause of real miracles, that is, the power of God; and the regularity of nature forms a strong presumption against the miraculous exertion of this power, except in extraordinary circumstances, and for extraordinary purposes, to which the established laws of the creation are not competent. But the observation of the uniformity of nature produces in multitudes, not merely this rational distrust of alleged violations of it, but a secret feeling, as if such violations were impossible. That attention to the powers of nature, which is implied in scientific research, tends to weaken the practical conviction of a higher power; and the laws of the creation, instead of being regarded as the modes

of divine operation, come insensibly to be considered as fetters on his agency, as too sacred to be suspended even by their Author. This secret feeling, essentially atheistical, and at war with all sound philosophy, is the chief foundation of that skepticism, which prevails in regard to miraculous agency, and deserves our particular consideration.

To a man, whose belief in God is strong and practical, a miracle will appear as possible as any other effect, as the most common event in life; and the argument against miracles, drawn from the uniformity of nature, will weigh with him, only as far as this uniformity is a pledge and proof of the Creator's disposition to accomplish his purposes by a fixed order or mode of operation. Now it is freely granted, that the Creator's regard or attachment to such an order may be inferred from the steadiness with which he observes it; and a strong presumption lies against any violation of it on slight occasions, or for purposes to which the established laws of nature are adequate. But this is the utmost, which the order of nature authorises us to infer respecting its Author. It forms no presumption against miracles universally, in all imaginable cases; but may even furnish a presumption in their favor.

We are never to forget, that God's adherence to the order of the universe is not necessary and mechanical, but intelligent and voluntary. He adheres to it not for its own sake, or because it has a sacredness which compels him to respect it, but because it is most suited to accomplish his purposes. It is a means and not an end; and like all other means must give way, when the end can best be promoted without it. It is the mark of a weak mind, to make an idol of order and method; to cling to established forms of business, when they clog in-

stead of advancing it. If then the great purposes of the universe can best be accomplished by departing from its established laws, these laws will undoubtedly be suspended ; and though broken in the letter, they will be observed in their spirit, for the ends, for which they were first instituted, will be advanced by their violation. Now the question arises, for what purposes were nature and its order appointed ; and there is no presumption in saying, that the highest of these is the improvement of intelligent beings. Mind, (by which we mean both moral and intellectual powers,) is God's first end. The great purpose, for which an order of nature is fixed, is plainly the formation of Mind. In a creation without order, where events would follow without any regular succession, it is obvious, that Mind must be kept in perpetual infancy ; for in such a universe, there could be no reasoning from effects to causes, no induction to establish general truths, no adaptation of means to ends ; that is, no science relating to God, or matter, or mind ; no action ; no virtue. The great purpose of God then, I repeat it, in establishing the order of nature, is to form and advance the mind ; and if the case should occur, in which the interests of the mind could best be advanced by departing from this order or by miraculous agency, then the great purpose of the creation, the great end of its laws and regularity, would demand such departure ; and miracles, instead of warring against, would concur with nature.

Now we Christians maintain, that such a case has existed. We affirm, that when Jesus Christ came into the world, nature had failed to communicate instructions to men, in which, as intelligent beings, they had the deepest concern, and on which the full developement of their highest faculties essentially depended ; and we

affirm, that there was no prospect of relief from nature; so that an exigence had occurred, in which additional communications, supernatural lights, might rationally be expected from the Father of spirits. Let me state two particulars out of many, in which men needed intellectual aids, not given by nature. I refer to the doctrine of one God and Father, on which all piety rests; and to the doctrine of Immortality, which is the great spring of virtuous effort. Had I time to enlarge on the history of that period, I might show you under what heaps of rubbish and superstition these doctrines were buried. But I should repeat only what you know familiarly. The works of ancient genius, which form your studies, carry on their front the brand of polytheism, and of debasing error on subjects of the first and deepest concern. It is more important to observe, that the very uniformity of nature had some tendency to obscure the doctrines which I have named, or at least to impair their practical power, so that a departure from this uniformity was needed to fasten them on men's minds.

That a fixed order of nature, though a proof of the One God to reflecting and enlarged understandings, has yet a tendency to hide him from men in general, will appear, if we consider first, that, as the human mind is constituted, what is regular and of constant occurrence, excites it feebly; and benefits, flowing to it through fixed, unchanging laws, seem to come by a kind of necessity, and are apt to be traced up to natural causes alone. Accordingly religious convictions and feelings, even in the present advanced condition of society, are excited, not so much by the ordinary course of God's providence, as by sudden, unexpected events, which rouse and startle the mind, and speak of a power higher than na-

ture.—There is another way, in which a fixed order of nature seems unfavorable to just impressions respecting its Author. It discovers to us in the Creator a regard to general good, rather than an affection to individuals. The laws of nature, operating, as they do, with an inflexible steadiness, never varying to meet the cases and wants of individuals, and inflicting much private suffering in their stern administration for the general weal, give the idea of a distant, reserved sovereign, much more than of a tender parent ; and yet this last view of God is the only effectual security from superstition and idolatry. Nature then, we fear, would not have brought back the world to its Creator.—And as to the doctrine of Immortality, the order of the natural world had little tendency to teach this, at least with clearness and energy. The natural world contains no provisions or arrangements for reviving the dead. The sun and the rain, which cover the tomb with verdure, send no vital influences to the mouldering body. The researches of science detect no secret processes for restoring the lost powers of life. If man is to live again, he is not to live through any known laws of nature, but by a power higher than nature ; and how then can we be assured of this truth, but by a manifestation of this power, that is, by miraculous agency confirming a future life ?

I have labored in these remarks to show, that the uniformity of nature is no presumption against miraculous agency, when employed in confirmation of such a religion as Christianity. Nature, on the contrary, furnishes a presumption in its favor. Nature clearly shows to us a power above itself, so that it proves miracles to be possible. Nature reveals purposes and attributes in its Author, with which Christianity remarkably agrees. Nature too has deficiencies, which show that it was not

intended by its Author to be his whole method of instructing mankind ; and in this way it gives great confirmation to Christianity, which meets its wants, supplies its chasms, explains its mysteries, and lightens its heart-oppressing cares and sorrows.

Before quitting the general consideration of miracles, I ought to take some notice of Hume's celebrated argument on this subject ; not that it merits the attention which it has received, but because it is specious, and has derived weight from the name of its author. The argument is briefly this,—‘that belief is founded upon and regulated by experience. Now we often experience testimony to be false, but never witness a departure from the order of nature... That men may deceive us when they testify to miracles, is therefore more accordant with experience, than that nature should be irregular ; and hence there is a balance of proof against miracles, a presumption so strong as to outweigh the strongest testimony.’ The usual replies to this argument I have not time to repeat. Dr. Campbell’s work, which is accessible to all, will show you, that it rests on an equivocal use of terms, and will furnish you with many fine remarks on testimony and on the conditions or qualities which give it validity. I will only add a few remarks which seem to me worthy of attention.

1. This argument affirms, that the credibility of facts or statements is to be decided by their accordance with the established order of nature, and by this standard only. Now if nature comprehended all existences and all powers, this position might be admitted. But if there is a Being higher than nature, the origin of all its powers and motions, and whose character falls under our notice and experience as truly as the creation, then there is an additional standard, to which facts and state-

ments are to be referred : and works, which violate nature's order, will still be credible, if they agree with the known properties and attributes of its author ; because for such works we can assign an adequate cause and sufficient reasons, and these are the qualities and conditions, on which credibility depends.

2. This argument of Hume proves too much, and therefore proves nothing. It proves too much ; for if I am to reject the strongest testimony to miracles, because testimony has often deceived me, whilst nature's order has never been found to fail, then I ought to reject a miracle, even if I should see it with my own eyes, and if all my senses should attest it ; for all my senses have sometimes given false reports, whilst nature has never gone astray ; and, therefore, be the circumstances ever so decisive or inconsistent with deception, still I must not believe what I see, and hear, and touch, what my senses, exercised according to the most deliberate judgment, declare to be true. All this the argument requires ; and it proves too much ; for disbelief, in the case supposed, is out of our power, and is instinctively pronounced absurd ; and what is more, it would subvert that very order of nature on which the argument rests ; for this order of nature is learned only by the exercise of my senses and judgment, and if these fail me, in the most unexceptionable circumstances, then their testimony to nature is of little worth.

Once more ; this argument is built on an ignorance of the nature of testimony. Testimony, we are told, cannot prove a miracle. Now the truth is, that testimony, of itself and immediately, proves no fact whatever, not even the most common. Testimony can do nothing more than show us the state of another's mind in regard to a given fact. It can only show us, that the

testifier has a belief, a conviction, that a certain phenomenon or event has occurred. Here testimony stops; and the reality of the event is to be judged altogether from the nature and degree of this conviction, and from the circumstances under which it exists. This conviction is an effect, which must have a cause, and needs to be explained; and if no cause can be found but the real occurrence of the event, then this occurrence is admitted as true. Such is the extent of testimony. Now a man, who affirms a miraculous phenomenon or event, may give us just as decisive proofs, by his character and conduct, of the strength and depth of his conviction, as if he were affirming a common occurrence. Testimony then does just as much in the case of miracles, as of common events; that is, it discloses to us the conviction of another's mind. Now this conviction in the case of miracles requires a cause, an explanation, as much as in every other; and if the circumstances be such, that it could not have sprung up and been established but by the reality of the alleged miracle, then that great and fundamental principle of human belief, namely, that every effect must have a cause, compels us to admit the miracle.

It may be observed of Hume and of other philosophical opposers of our religion, that they are much more inclined to argue against miracles in general, than against the particular miracles, on which Christianity rests. And the reason is obvious. Miracles, when considered in a general abstract manner, that is, when divested of all circumstances, and supposed to occur as disconnected facts, to stand alone in history, to have no explanations or reasons in preceding events, and no influence on those which follow, are indeed open to great objection, and even to absurd violations of nature's

order; and it is accordingly against miracles, considered in this naked, general form, that the arguments of infidelity are chiefly urged. But it is great disingenuity to class under this head the miracles of Christianity. They are palpably different. They do not stand alone in history; but are most intimately incorporated with it. They were demanded by the state of the world which preceded them, and they have left deep traces on all subsequent ages. In fact, the history of the whole civilized world, since their alleged occurrence, has been swayed and colored by them, and is wholly inexplicable without them. Now such miracles are not to be met and disposed of by general reasonings, which apply only to insulated, unimportant, uninfluential prodigies.

I have thus considered the objections to miracles in general; and I would close this head with observing, that these objections will lose their weight, just in proportion as we strengthen our conviction of God's power over nature and of his paternal interest in his creatures. The great repugnance to the belief of miraculous agency is founded in a lurking atheism, which ascribes supremacy to nature, and which, whilst it professes to believe in God, questions his tender concern for the improvement of men. To a man who cherishes a sense of God, the great difficulty is, not to account for miracles, but to account for their rare occurrence. One of the mysteries of the universe is this, that its Author retires so continually behind the veil of his works, that the great and good Father does not manifest himself more distinctly to his creatures. There is something like coldness and repulsiveness in contradicting us openly by fixed, inflexible laws of nature. The intercourse of God with Adam and the patriarchs, and the most forcible proofs of the relation which he bears to the human race, and

ought not to surprise us more, than the expression of a human parent's tenderness and concern towards his offspring.

After the remarks now made to remove the objection to revelation in general, I proceed to consider the evidences of the christian religion in particular; and these are so numerous, that should I attempt to compress them into the short space which now remains, I could give but a syllabus, a dry and uninteresting index. It will be more useful to state to you, with some distinctness, the general principle into which all christian evidences may be resolved, and on which the whole religion rests; and then to illustrate it in a few striking particulars.

All the evidences of Christianity may be traced to this great principle,—that every effect must have an adequate cause. We claim for our religion a divine original, because no adequate cause for it can be found in the powers or passions of human nature, or in the circumstances under which it appeared; because it can only be accounted for by the interposition of that Being, to whom its first preachers universally ascribed it, and with whose nature it perfectly agrees.

Christianity, by which we mean not merely the doctrines of the religion, but everything relating to it, its rise, its progress, the character of its author, the conduct of its propagation, Christianity, in this broad sense, can only be accounted for in two ways. It either sprung from the principles of human nature, under the excitements, motives, impulses of the age in which it was first preached; or it had its origin in a higher and superhuman agency. To which of these causes the religion should be referred, is not a question beyond our reason, for human nature is well known.

ing more of it than of any other part of creation, we can judge with sufficient accuracy of the operation of its principles, and of the effects to which they are competent. It is indeed true, that human powers are not exactly defined, nor can we state precisely the bounds beyond which they cannot pass ; but still the disproportion between human nature and an effect ascribed to it may be so vast and palpable, as to satisfy us at once, that the effect is inexplicable by human power. I know not precisely what advances may be made by the intellect of an unassisted savage ; but that a savage in the woods could not compose the Principia of Newton is about as plain, as that he could not create the world. I know not the point, at which bodily strength must stop ; but that a man cannot carry Atlas or Andes on his shoulders is a safe position. The question, therefore, whether the principles of human nature, under the circumstances in which it was placed at Christ's birth, will explain his religion, is one to which we are competent, and is the great question on which the whole controversy turns.

Now we maintain, that a great variety of facts belonging to this religion,—such as the character of its Founder ; its peculiar principles ; the style and character of its records ; its progress ; the conduct, circumstances, and sufferings of its first propagators ; the reception of it from the first on the ground of miraculous attestations ; the prophecies which it fulfilled and which it contains ; its influence on society, and other circumstances connected with it ; are utterly inexplicable by human powers and principles, but accord with and are fully explained by the power and perfections of God.

These various particulars I cannot attempt to unfold. One or two may be illustrated to show you the mode of

applying the principles which I have laid down. I will take first the character of Jesus Christ. How is this to be explained by the principles of human nature?—We are immediately struck with this peculiarity in the Author of Christianity, that whilst all other men are formed in a measure by the spirit of the age, we can discover in Jesus no impression of the period in which he lived. We know with considerable accuracy the state of society, the modes of thinking, the hopes and expectations of the country in which Jesus was born and grew up; and he is as free from them; and as exalted above them, as if he had lived in another world, or, with every sense shut on the objects around him. His character has in it nothing local or temporary. It can be explained by nothing around him. His history shows him to us a solitary being, living for purposes which none but himself comprehended, and enjoying not so much as the sympathy of a single mind. His apostles, his chosen companions, brought to him the spirit of the age; and nothing shows its strength more strikingly, than the slowness with which it yielded, in these honest men to the instructions of Jesus.

Jesus came to a nation expecting a Messiah; and he claimed this character. But instead of conforming to the opinions which prevailed in regard to the Messiah, he resisted them wholly and without reserve. To a people anticipating a triumphant leader, under whom vengeance as well as ambition was to be glutted by the prostration of their oppressors, he came as a spiritual leader, teaching humility and peace. This undisguised hostility to the dearest hopes and prejudices of his nation; this disdain of the usual compliances, by which ambition and imposture conciliate adherents; this deliberate exposure of himself to rejection and hatred, cannot

easily be explained by the common principles of human nature, and excludes the possibility of selfish aims in the Author of Christianity.

One striking peculiarity in Jesus is the extent, the vastness of his views. Whilst all around him looked for a Messiah to liberate God's ancient people, whilst to every other Jew, Judea was the exclusive object of pride and hope, Jesus came, declaring himself to be the deliverer and light of the world, and in his whole teaching and life, you see a consciousness, which never forsakes him, of a relation to the whole human race. This idea of blessing mankind, of spreading a universal religion, was the most magnificent which had ever entered man's mind. All previous religions had been given to particular nations. No conqueror, legislator, philosopher, in the extravagance of ambition, had ever dreamed of subjecting all nations to a common faith.

This conception of a universal religion, intended alike for Jew and Gentile, for all nations and climes, is wholly inexplicable by the circumstances of Jesus. He was a Jew, and the first and deepest and most constant impression on a Jew's mind, was that of the superiority, conferred on his people and himself by the national religion introduced by Moses. The wall between the Jew and the Gentile seemed to reach to heaven. The abolition of the peculiarity of Moses, the prostration of the temple on Mount Zion, the erection of a new religion, in which all men would meet as brethren, and which would be the common and equal property of Jew and Gentile, these were of all ideas the last to spring up in Judea, the last for enthusiasm or imposture to originate.

Compare next these views of Christ with his station in life. He was of humble birth and education, with

nothing in his lot, with no extensive means, no rank, or wealth, or patronage, to infuse vast thoughts and extravagant plans. The shop of a carpenter, the village of Nazareth, were not spots for ripening a scheme, more aspiring and extensive than had ever been formed. It is a principle of human nature, that, except in case of insanity, some proportion is observed between the power of an individual, and his plans and hopes. The purpose, to which Jesus devoted himself, was as ill suited to his condition as an attempt to change the seasons, or to make the sun rise in the west. That a young man, in obscure life, belonging to an oppressed nation, should seriously think of subverting the time-hallowed and deep-rooted religions of the world, is a strange fact; but with this purpose we see the mind of Jesus thoroughly imbued; and, sublime as it is, he never falls below it in his language or conduct, but speaks and acts with a consciousness of superiority, with a dignity and authority, becoming this unparalleled destination.

In this connexion I cannot but add another striking circumstance in Jesus, and that is, the calm confidence with which he always looked forward to the accomplishment of his design. He fully knew the strength of the passions and powers which were arrayed against him, and was perfectly aware that his life was to be shortened by violence; yet not a word escapes him implying a doubt of the ultimate triumphs of his religion. One of the beauties of the gospels, and one of the proofs of their genuineness, is found in our Saviour's indirect and obscure allusions to his approaching sufferings, and to the glory which was to follow; allusions showing us the workings of a mind, thoroughly conscious of being appointed to accomplish infinite good through great calamity. This entire and patient relinquishment of

immediate success, this ever present persuasion that he was to perish before his religion would advance, and this calm, unshaken anticipation of distant and unbounded triumphs, are remarkable traits, throwing a tender and solemn grandeur over our Lord, and wholly inexplicable by human principles, or by the circumstances in which he was placed.

The views hitherto taken of Christ relate to his public character and office. If we pass to what may be called his private character, we shall receive the same impression of inexplicable excellence. The most striking trait in Jesus was, undoubtedly, benevolence; and although this virtue had existed before, yet it had not been manifested in the same form and extent. Christ's benevolence was distinguished first by its expansiveness. At that age, an unconfined philanthropy, proposing and toiling to do good without distinction of country or rank, was unknown. Love to man as man, love comprehending the hated Samaritan and the despised publican, was a feature which separated Jesus from the best men of his nation and of the world. Another characteristic of the benevolence of Jesus was its gentleness and tenderness, forming a strong contrast with the hardness and ferocity of the spirit and manners which then prevailed, and with that sternness and inflexibility which the purest philosophy of Greece and Rome inculcated as the perfection of virtue. But its most distinguishing trait was its superiority to injury. Revenge was one of the recognised rights of the age in which he lived; and though a few sages, who had seen its inconsistency with man's dignity, had condemned it, yet none had inculcated the duty of regarding one's worst enemies with that kindness which God manifests to sinful men, and of returning curses with blessings and prayers. This form

of benevolence, the most disinterested and divine form, was, as you well know, manifested by Jesus Christ in infinite strength, amidst injuries and indignities which cannot be surpassed. Now this singular eminence of goodness, this superiority to the degrading influences of the ages, under which all other men suffered, needs to be explained ; and one thing it demonstrates, that Jesus Christ was not an unprincipled deceiver, exposing not only his own life, but the lives of confiding friends, in an enterprise next to desperate.

I cannot enlarge on other traits of the character of Christ. I will only observe, that it had one distinction, which, more than anything, forms a perfect character. It was made up of contrasts ; in other words, it was a union of excellences which are not easily reconciled, which seem at first sight incongruous, but which, when blended and duly proportioned, constitute moral harmony, and attract, with equal power, love and veneration. For example, we discover in Jesus Christ an unparalleled dignity of character, a consciousness of greatness, never discovered or approached by any other individual in history ; and yet this was blended with a condescension, lowness, and unostentatious simplicity, which had never before been thought consistent with greatness. In like manner he united an utter superiority to the world, to its pleasures and ordinary interests, with suavity of manners and freedom of austerity. He joined strong feeling and self-possession ; an indignant sensibility to sin and compassion to the sinner ; an intense devotion to his work, and calmness under opposition and ill success ; a universal philanthropy, and a susceptibility of private attachments ; the authority which became the Saviour of the world, and the tenderness and gratitude of a son. Such was the author of our religion. And is

his character to be explained by imposture or insane enthusiasm? Does it not bear the unambiguous marks of a heavenly origin?

Perhaps it may be said, this character never existed. Then the invention of it is to be explained, and the reception which this fiction met with; and these perhaps are as difficult of explanation on natural principles, as its real existence. Christ's history bears all the marks of reality; a more frank, simple, unlaboried, unostentatious narrative was never penned. Besides, his character, if invented, must have been an invention of singular difficulty, because no models existed on which to frame it. He stands alone in the records of time. The conception of a being, proposing such new and exalted ends, and governed by higher principles than the progress of society had developed, implies singular intellectual power. That several individuals should join in equally vivid conceptions of this character; and should not merely describe in general terms the fictitious being to whom it was attributed, but should introduce him into real life, should place him in a great variety of circumstances, in connexion with various ranks of men, with friends and foes, and should in all preserve his identity, show the same great and singular mind always acting in harmony with itself; this is a supposition hardly credible; and, when the circumstances of the writers of the New Testament are considered, seems to be as inexplicable on human principles, as what I before suggested, the composition of Newton's Principia by a savage. The character of Christ, though delineated in an age of great moral darkness, has stood the scrutiny of ages; and in proportion as men's moral sentiments have been refined, its beauty has been more seen and felt. To suppose it invented, is to suppose that its authors,

outstripping their age, had attained to a singular delicacy and elevation of moral perception and feeling. But these attainments are not very reconcilable with the character of its authors, supposing it to be a fiction ; that is, with the character of habitual liars and impious deceivers.

But we are not only unable to discover powers adequate to this invention. There must have been motives for it ; for men do not make great efforts, without strong motives ; and in the whole compass of human incitements, we challenge the infidel to suggest any, which could have prompted to the work now to be explained.

Once more, it must be recollectcd, that this invention, if it were one, was received as real, at a period so near to the time ascribed to Christ's appearance, that the means of detecting it were infinite. That men should send out such a forgery, and that it should prevail and triumph, are circumstances not easily reconcilable with the principles of our nature.

The character of Christ then was real. Its reality is the only explanation of the mighty revolution produced by his religion. And how can you account for it, but by that cause to which he always referred it, a mission from the Father ?

Next to the character of Christ, his religion might be shown to abound in circumstances which contradict and repel the idea of a human origin. For example, its representations of the paternal character of God ; its inculcation of a universal charity ; the stress which it lays on inward purity ; its substitution of a spiritual worship for the forms and ceremonies, which everywhere had usurped the name and extinguished the life of religion ; its preference of humility, and of the mild, unostenta-

tious, passive virtues, to the dazzling qualities which had monopolized men's admiration ; its consistent and bright discoveries of immortality ; its adaptation to the wants of man as a sinner ; its adaptation to all the conditions, capacities, and sufferings of human nature ; its pure, sublime, yet practicable morality ; its high and generous motives ; and its fitness to form a character, which plainly prepares for a higher life than the present ; these are peculiarities of Christianity, which will strike us more and more, in proportion as we understand distinctly the circumstances of the age and country in which this religion appeared, and for which no adequate human cause has been or can be assigned.

Passing over these topics, each of which might be enlarged into a discourse, I will make but one remark on this religion, which strikes my own mind very forcibly. Since its introduction, human nature has made great progress, and society experienced great changes ; and in this advanced condition of the world, Christianity, instead of losing its application and importance, is found to be more and more congenial and adapted to man's nature and wants. Men have outgrown the other institutions of that period when Christianity appeared, its philosophy, its modes of warfare, its policy, its public and private economy ; but Christianity has never shrunk as intellect has opened, but has always kept in advance of men's faculties, and unfolded nobler views in proportion as they have ascended. The highest powers and affections, which our nature has developed, find more than adequate objects in this religion. Christianity is indeed peculiarly fitted to the more improved stages of society, to the more delicate sensibilities of refined minds, and especially to that dissatisfaction with the present state, which always grows with the growth

of our moral powers and affections. As men advance in civilisation, they become susceptible of mental sufferings, to which ruder ages are strangers ; and these Christianity is fitted to assuage. Imagination and intellect become more restless ; and Christianity brings them tranquillity by the eternal and magnificent truths, the solemn and unbounded prospects, which it unfolds. This fitness of our religion to more advanced stages of society than that in which it was introduced, to wants of human nature not then developed, seems to me very striking. The religion bears the marks of having come from a being who perfectly understood the human mind, and had power to provide for its progress. This feature of Christianity is of the nature of prophecy. It was an anticipation of future and distant ages ; and when we consider among whom our religion sprung, where, but in God, can we find an explanation of this peculiarity ?

I have now offered a few hints on the character of Christ, and on the character of his religion ; and before quitting these topics, I would observe, that they form a strong presumption in favor of the miraculous facts of the Christian history. These miracles were not wrought by a man, whose character, in other respects, was ordinary. They were acts of a being, whose mind was as singular as his works, who spoke and acted with more than human authority, whose moral qualities and sublime purposes were in accordance with superhuman powers. Christ's miracles are in unison with his whole character, and bear a proportion to it, like that which we observe in the most harmonious productions of nature ; and in this way they receive from it great confirmation. And the same presumption in their favor arises from his religion. That a religion, carrying in

itself such marks of divinity, and so inexplicable on human principles, should receive outward confirmations from Omnipotence, is not surprising. The extraordinary character of the religion accords with, and seems to demand, extraordinary interpositions in its behalf. Its miracles are not solitary, naked, unexplained, disconnected events, but are bound up with a system, which is worthy of God, and impressed with God; which occupies a large space, and is operating with great and increasing energy, in human affairs.

As yet I have not touched on what seem to many writers the strongest proofs of Christianity, I mean the direct evidences of its miracles, by which we mean the testimony borne to them, including the character, conduct, and condition of the witnesses. These I have not time to unfold; nor is this labor needed; for Paley's inestimable work, which is one of your classical books, has stated these proofs with great clearness and power. I would only observe, that they may all be resolved into this single principle, namely, that the christian miracles were originally believed under such circumstances, that this belief can only be explained by their actual occurrence. That Christianity was received at first on the ground of miracles, and that its first preachers and converts proved the depth and strength of their conviction of these facts, by attesting them in sufferings and in death, we know from the most ancient records, which relate to this religion, both christian and heathen; and, in fact, this conviction can alone explain their adherence to Christianity. Now that this conviction could only have sprung from the reality of the miracles, we infer from the known circumstances of these witnesses, whose passions, interests, and strongest prejudices, were origi-

nally hostile to the new religion ; whose motives for examining with care the facts on which it rested were as urgent and solemn, and whose means and opportunities of ascertaining their truth were as ample and unfailing, as can be conceived to conspire ; so that the supposition of their falsehood cannot be admitted, without subverting our trust in human judgment and human testimony under the most favorable circumstances for discovering truth ; that is, without introducing universal skepticism.

There is one class of christian evidences, to which I have but slightly referred, but which has struck with peculiar force men of reflecting minds. I refer to the marks of truth and reality, which are found in the Christian records ; to the internal proofs which the books of the New Testament carry with them, of having been written by men, who lived in the first age of Christianity, who believed and felt its truth, who bore a part in the labors and conflicts which attended its establishment, and who wrote from personal knowledge and deep conviction. A few remarks to illustrate the nature and power of these internal proofs, which are furnished by the books of the New Testament, I will now subjoin.

The New Testament consists of histories and epistles. The historical books, namely, the Gospels and the Acts, are a continued narrative, embracing many years, and professing to give the history of the rise and progress of the religion. Now it is worthy of observation, that these writings completely answer their end ; that they completely solve the problem, how this peculiar religion grew up and established itself in the world ; that they furnish precise and adequate causes for this stupendous revolution in human affairs. It is also wor-

thy of remark, that they relate a series of facts, which are not only connected with one another, but are intimately linked with the long series which has followed them, and agree accurately with subsequent history, so as to account for and sustain it. Now that a collection of fictitious narratives, coming from different hands, comprehending many years, and spreading over many countries, should not only form a consistent whole, when taken by themselves; but should also connect and interweave themselves with real history so naturally and intimately, as to furnish no clue for detection, as to exclude the appearance of incongruity and discordance, and as to give an adequate explanation and the only explanation of acknowledged events, of the most important revolution in society; this is a supposition, from which an intelligent man at once revolts, and which, if admitted, would shake a principal foundation of history.

I have before spoken of the unity and consistency of Christ's character as developed in the Gospels, and of the agreement of the different writers in giving us the singular features of his mind. Now there are the same marks of truth running through the whole of these narratives. For example, the effects produced by Jesus on the various classes of society; the different feelings of admiration, attachment, and envy, which he called forth; the various expressions of these feelings; the prejudices, mistakes, and gradual illumination of his disciples; these are all given to us with such marks of truth and reality as could not easily be counterfeited. The whole history is precisely such, as might be expected from the actual appearance of such a person as Jesus Christ, in such a state of society as then existed.

The Epistles, if possible, abound in marks of truth and reality even more than the Gospels. They are im-

bued thoroughly with the spirit of the first age of Christianity. They bear all the marks of having come from men, plunged in the conflicts which the new religion excited, alive to its interests, identified with its fortunes. They betray the very state of mind, which must have been generated by the peculiar condition of the first propagators of the religion. They are letters written on real business, intended for immediate effects, designed to meet prejudices and passions, which such a religion must at first have awakened. They contain not a trace of the circumstances of a later age, or of the feelings, impressions, and modes of thinking by which later times were characterised, and from which later writers could not easily have escaped. The letters of Paul have a remarkable agreement with his history. They are precisely such as might be expected from a man of a vehement mind, who had been brought up in the schools of Jewish literature, who had been converted by a sudden, overwhelming miracle, who had been entrusted with the preaching of the new religion to the Gentiles, and who was everywhere met by the prejudices and persecuting spirit of his own nation. They are full of obscurities growing out of these points of Paul's history and character, and out of the circumstances of the infant church, and which nothing but an intimate acquaintance with that early period can illustrate. This remarkable infusion of the spirit of the first age into the christian records cannot easily be explained but by the fact, that they were written in that age by the real and zealous propagators of Christianity, and that they are records of real convictions and of actual events.

There is another evidence of Christianity, still more internal than any on which I have yet dwelt, an evi-

dence to be felt rather than described, but not less real, because founded on feeling. I refer to that conviction of the divine original of our religion, which springs up and continually gains strength, in those who apply it habitually to their tempers and lives, and who imbibe its spirit and hopes. In such men, there is a consciousness of the adaptation of Christianity to their noblest faculties; a consciousness of its exalting and consoling influences, of its power to confer the true happiness of human nature, to give that peace, which the world cannot give; which assures them, that it is not of earthly origin, but a ray from the Everlasting Light, a stream from the fountain of Heavenly Wisdom and Love. This is the evidence which sustains the faith of thousands, who never read and cannot understand the learned books of christian apologists, who want, perhaps, words to explain the ground of their belief, but whose faith is of adamantine firmness, who hold the gospel with a conviction more intimate and unwavering, than mere argument ever produced.

But I must tear myself from a subject, which opens upon me continually as I proceed.—Imperfect as this discussion is, the conclusion, I trust, is placed beyond doubt, that Christianity is true. And, my hearers, if true, it is the greatest of all truths, deserving and demanding our reverent attention and fervent gratitude. This religion must never be confounded with our common blessings. It is a revelation of pardon, which, as sinners, we all need. Still more, it is a revelation of human immortality; a doctrine, which, however undervalued amidst the bright anticipations of inexperienced youth, is found to be our strength and consolation, and the only effectual spring of persevering and victorious virtue, when the realities of life have scattered our vis-

ionary hopes ; when pain, disappointment, and temptation press upon us ; when this world's enjoyments are found unable to quench that deep thirst of happiness which burns in every breast ; when friends, whom we love as our own souls, die ; and our own graves open before us.—To all who hear me, and especially to my young hearers, I would say, let the truth of this religion be the strongest conviction of your understandings ; let its motives and precepts sway with an absolute power your characters and lives.



DISCOURSE

AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. E. S. GANNETT.
BOSTON, 1824.

MATTHEW X. 16.

BEHOLD, I SEND YOU FORTH AS SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES: BE YE THEREFORE WISE AS SERPENTS AND HARMLESS AS DOVES.

THE communication of moral and religious truth is the most important office committed to men. The Son of God came into the world, not to legislate for nations, not to command armies, not to sit on the throne of universal monarchy; but to teach religion, to establish truth and holiness. The highest end of human nature is duty, virtue, piety, excellence, moral greatness, spiritual glory; and he, who effectually labors for these, is taking part with God, in God's noblest work. The christian ministry, then, which has for its purpose men's spiritual improvement and salvation, and which is intrusted for this end with weapons of heavenly temper and power, deserves to be ranked amongst God's most beneficent institutions and men's most honorable labors. The occasion requires that this institution should be our principal topic.

How happy a change has taken place since the words of Christ in the text were spoken! Ministers are no longer sent forth into the midst of wolves. Through

the labors, sufferings, and triumphs of apostles, martyrs, and good and great men in successive ages, Christianity has become the professed and honored religion of the most civilized nations, and its preachers are exposed to very different temptations from those of savage persecution. Still our text has an application to the present time. We see our Saviour commanding his apostles, to regard in their ministry the circumstances of the age in which they lived. Surrounded with foes, they were to exercise the wisdom or prudence, of which the serpent was in ancient times the emblem, and to join with it the innocence and mildness of the dove. And in like manner, the christian minister is at all periods to regard the signs, the distinctive marks and character of the age to which he belongs, and must accommodate his ministry to its wants and demands. Accordingly, I propose to consider some of the leading traits of the present age, and the influence which they should have on a christian teacher.

I. The state of the world, compared with the past, may be called enlightened, and requires an enlightened ministry. It hardly seems necessary to prove, that religion should be dispensed by men, who at least keep pace with the intellect of the age in which they live. Some passages of scripture however have been wrested to prove, that an unlearned ministry is that which God particularly honors. He always chooses, we are told, 'the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.' But texts of this description are misunderstood, through the very ignorance which they are adduced to support. The wise, who are spoken of contemptuously in the New Testament, were not really enlightened men, but pretenders to wisdom, who substituted dreams of imagina-

tion and wild hypotheses for sober inquiry into God's works, and who knew comparatively nothing of nature or the human mind. The present age has a quite different illumination from that, in which ancient philosophy prided itself. It is marked by great and obvious improvements in the methods of reasoning and inquiry, and by the consequent discovery and diffusion of a great mass of physical and moral truth, wholly unknown in the time of Christ. Now we affirm, that such an age demands an enlightened ministry. We want teachers, who will be able to discern and unfold the consistency of revealed religion with the new lights which are breaking in from nature ; and who will be able to draw, from all men's discoveries in the outward world and in their own souls, illustrations, analogies, and arguments for Christianity. We have reason to believe, that God, the author of nature and revelation, has established a harmony between them, and that their beams are intended to mingle and shed a joint radiance ; and consequently, other things being equal, that teacher is best fitted to dispense Christianity, whose compass of mind enables him to compare what God is teaching in his works and in his word, and to present the truths of religion with those modifications and restraints which other acknowledged truths require. Christianity now needs dispensers, who will make history, nature, and the improvements of society, tributary to its elucidation and support ; who will show its adaptation to man as an ever progressive being ; who will be able to meet the objections to its truth, which will naturally be started in an active, stirring, inquiring age ; and though last not least, who will have enough of mental and moral courage to detect and renounce the errors in the Church, on which such objections are generally built. In such an age, a

ministry is wanted, which will furnish discussions of religious topics, not inferior at least in intelligence to those, which people are accustomed to read and hear on other subjects. Christianity will suffer, if at a time, when vigor and acuteness of thinking are carried into all other departments, the pulpit should send forth nothing but wild declamation, positive assertion, or dull commonplaces, with which even childhood is satiated. Religion must be seen to be the friend and quickener of intellect. It must be exhibited with clearness of reasoning and variety of illustration; nor ought it to be deprived of the benefits of a pure and felicitous diction and of rich and glowing imagery, where these gifts fall to the lot of the teacher. It is not meant that every minister must be a man of genius; for genius is one of God's rarest inspirations; and of all the breathings of genius, perhaps the rarest is eloquence. I mean only to say, that the age demands of those, who devote themselves to the administration of Christianity, that they should feel themselves called upon for the highest cultivation and fullest developement of the intellectual nature. Instead of thinking, that the ministry is a refuge for dulness, and that whoever can escape from the plough is fit for God's spiritual husbandry, we ought to feel that no profession demands more enlarged thinking and more various acquisitions of truth.

In proportion as society becomes enlightened, talent acquires influence. In rude ages bodily strength is the most honorable distinction, and in subsequent times military prowess and skill confer mastery and eminence. But as society advances, mind, thought, becomes the sovereign of the world; and accordingly, at the present moment, profound and glowing thought, though breathing only from the silent page, exerts a kind of omnipot-

tent and omnipresent energy. It crosses oceans and spreads through nations; and at one and the same moment, the conceptions of a single mind are electrifying and kindling multitudes, through wider regions than the Roman Eagle overshadowed. This agency of mind on mind, I repeat it, is the true sovereignty of the world, and kings and heroes are becoming impotent by the side of men of deep and fervent thought. In such a state of things, Religion would wage a very unequal war, if divorced from talent and cultivated intellect, if committed to weak and untaught minds. God plainly intends, that it should be advanced by human agency; and does he not then intend, to summon to its aid the mightiest and noblest power with which man is gifted?

Let it not be said, that Christianity has an intrinsic glory, a native beauty, which no art or talent of man can heighten; that Christianity is one and the same, by whatever lips it is communicated, and that it needs nothing but the most naked exposition of its truths, to accomplish its saving purposes. Who does not know, that all truth takes a life and form from the soul through which it passes, that in every mind it is invested with peculiar associations, and that consequently the same truth is quite a different thing, when exhibited by men of different habits of thought and feeling? Who does not know, that the sublimest doctrines lose in some hands all their grandeur, and the loveliest all their attractiveness? Who does not know, how much the diffusion and power of any system, whether physical, moral, or political, depend on the order according to which it is arranged, on the broad and consistent views which are given of it, on the connexions which it is shown to hold with other truths, on the analogies by which it is illustrated, adorned, and enforced, and though last not least, on the

clearness and energy of the style in which it is conveyed? ‘Nothing is needed in religion,’ some say, ‘but the naked truth.’ But I apprehend, that there is no such thing as naked truth, at least as far as moral subjects are concerned. Truth which relates to God, and duty, and happiness, and a future state, is always humanized, if I may so use the word, by passing through a human mind; and when communicated powerfully, it always comes to us in drapery, thrown round it by the imagination, reason, and moral feelings of the teacher. It comes to us warm and living with the impressions and affections, which it has produced in the soul from which it issues; and it ought so to come; for the highest evidence of moral truth is found in the moral principles and feelings of our nature, and therefore it fails of its best support, unless it is seen to accord with and to act upon these. The evidence of Christianity, which operates most universally, is not history nor miracles, but its correspondence to the noblest capacities, deepest wants, and purest aspirations of our nature, to the cravings of an immortal spirit; and when it comes to us from a mind in which it has discovered nothing of this adaptation, and has touched none of these springs, it wants one of its chief signatures of divinity. Christianity is not then to be exhibited nakedly. It owes much of its power to the mind, which communicates it; and the greater the enlargement and developement of the mind of which it has possessed itself, and from which it flows, the wider and deeper will be its action on other souls.

It may be said without censoriousness, that the ordinary mode, in which Christianity has been exhibited in past times, does not suit the illumination of the present. That mode has been too narrow, technical, pedantic. Religion has been made a separate business, and a dull,

unsocial, melancholy business too, instead of being manifested as a truth, which bears on and touches everything human, as a universal spirit, which ought to breathe through and modify all our desires and pursuits, all our trains of thought and emotion. And this narrow, forbidding mode of exhibiting Christianity is easily explained by its early history. Monks shut up in cells ; a priesthood cut off by celibacy from the sympathies and most interesting relations of life ; and universities enslaved to a scholastic logic, and taught to place wisdom in verbal subtleties and unintelligible definitions ; these took Christianity into their keeping ; and at their chilling touch this generous religion, so full of life and affection, became a dry, frigid, abstract system. Christianity, as it came from their hands, and has been transmitted by a majority of protestant divines, reminds us of the human form, compressed by swathing bands, until every joint is rigid, every movement constrained, and almost all the beauty and grace of nature obliterated. Instead of regarding it as a heavenly institution, designed to perfect our whole nature, to offer awakening and purifying objects to the intellect, imagination, and heart, to develope every capacity of devout and social feeling, to form a rich, various, generous virtue, divines have cramped and tortured the gospel into various systems, composed in the main of theological riddles and contradictions ; and this religion of love has been made to inculcate a monkish and dark visaged piety, very hostile to the free expansion and full enjoyment of all our faculties and social affections. Great improvements indeed in this particular are taking place among Christians of almost every denomination. Religion has been brought from the cell of the monk, and the school of the verbal disputant, into life and society ; and its connexions

with all our pursuits and feelings have been made manifest. Still, Christianity, I apprehend, is not viewed in sufficiently broad lights to meet the spirit of an age, which is tracing connexions between all objects of thought and branches of knowledge, and which cannot but distrust an alleged revelation, in as far as it is seen to want harmonies and affinities with other parts of God's system, and especially with human nature and human life.

II. The age in which we live demands not only an enlightened but an earnest ministry, for it is an age of earnestness and excitement. Men feel and think at present with more energy than formerly. There is more of interest and fervor. We learn now from experience what might have been inferred from the purposes of our Creator, that civilisation and refinement are not, as has been sometimes thought, inconsistent with sensibility; that the intellect may grow without exhausting or overshadowing the heart. The human mind was never more in earnest than at the present moment. The political revolutions, which form such broad features and distinctions of our age, have sprung from a new and deep working in the human soul. Men have caught glimpses, however indistinct, of the worth, dignity, rights, and great interests of their nature; and a thirst for untried good, and impatience of long endured wrongs, have broken out wildly, like the fires of Etna, and shaken and convulsed the earth. It is impossible not to discern this increased fervor of mind in every department of life. A new spirit of improvement is abroad. The imagination can no longer be confined to the acquisitions of past ages, but is kindling the passions by vague but noble ideas of blessings never yet attained.

Multitudes, unwilling to wait the slow pace of that great innovator, time, are taking the work of reform into their own hands. Accordingly the reverence for antiquity and for age-hallowed establishments, and the passion for change and amelioration, are now arrayed against each other in open hostility, and all great questions, affecting human happiness, are debated with the eagerness of party. The character of the age is stamped very strongly on its literary productions. Who, that can compare the present with the past, is not struck with the bold and earnest spirit of the literature of our times. It refuses to waste itself on trifles, or to minister to mere gratification. Almost all that is written has now some bearing on great interests of human nature. Fiction is no longer a mere amusement; but transcendent genius, accommodating itself to the character of the age, has seized upon this province of literature, and turned fiction from a toy into a mighty engine, and, under the light tale, is breathing through the community either its reverence for the old or its thirst for the new, communicates the spirit and lessons of history, unfolds the operations of religious and civil institutions, and defends or assails new theories of education or morals by exhibiting them in life and action. The poetry of the age is equally characteristic. It has a deeper and more impressive tone than comes to us from what has been called the Augustan age of English literature. The regular, elaborate, harmonious strains which delighted a former generation, are now accused, I say not how justly, of playing too much on the surface of nature and of the heart. Men want and demand a more thrilling note, a poetry which pierces beneath the exterior of life to the depths of the soul, and which lays open its mysterious workings, borrowing from the whole outward

creation fresh images and correspondences, with which to illuminate the secrets of the world within us. So keen is this appetite, that extravagances of imagination, and gross violations both of taste and moral sentiment, are forgiven, when conjoined with what awakens strong emotion; and unhappily the most stirring is the most popular poetry, even though it issue from the desolate soul of a misanthrope and a libertine, and exhale poison and death.

Now, religion ought to be dispensed in accommodation to this spirit and character of our age. Men desire excitement, and religion must be communicated in a more exciting form. It must be seen not only to correspond and to be adapted to the intellect, but to furnish nutriment and appeals to the highest and profoundest sentiments of our nature. It must not be exhibited in the dry, pedantic divisions of a scholastic theology; nor must it be set forth and tricked out in the light drapery of an artificial rhetoric, in prettinesses of style, in measured sentences, with an insipid floridness, and in the form of elegantly feeble essays. No; it must come from the soul in the language of earnest conviction and strong feeling. Men will not now be trifled with. They listen impatiently to great subjects treated with apathy. They want a religion which will take a strong hold upon them; and no system, I am sure, can now maintain its ground, which wants the power of awakening real and deep interest in the soul. It is objected to Unitarian Christianity that it does not possess this heart-stirring energy, and if so it will, and still more, it ought to fall; for it does not suit the spirit of our times, nor the essential and abiding spirit of human nature. Men will prefer even a fanaticism which is in earnest, to a pretended rationality, which leaves untouched all

the great springs of the soul, which never lays a quickening hand on our love and veneration, our awe and fear, our hope and joy.

It is obvious, I think, that the spirit of the age, which demands a more exciting administration of Christianity, begins to be understood and is responded to by preachers. Those of us, whose memory extends back but a little way, can see a revolution taking place in this country. 'The repose of the pulpit' has been disturbed. In England the established Church gives broad symptoms of awaking ; and the slumbering incumbents of a state religion, either roused by sympathy, or aware of the necessity of self-defence, are beginning to exhibit the energy of the freer and more zealous sects around them.

In such an age earnestness should characterize the ministry ; and by this I mean not a louder voice or a more vehement gesture ; I mean no tricks of oratory ; but a solemn conviction that religion is a great concern, and a solemn purpose that its claims shall be felt by others. To suit such an age, a minister must communicate religion, not only as a result of reasoning, but as a matter of experience, with that inexpressible character of reality, that life and power, which accompany truths drawn from a man's own soul. We ought to speak of religion as something which we ourselves know. Its influences, struggles, joys, sorrows, triumphs, should be delineated from our own history. The life and sensibility which we would spread should be strong in our own breasts. This is the only genuine, unfailing spring of an earnest ministry. Men may work themselves for a time into a servor by artificial means ; but the flame is unsteady, 'a crackling of thorns' on a cold hearth ; and ~~Master all~~ it is hard for the most successful art to give even for a time that soul-subduing tone to the

voice, that air of native feeling to the countenance, and that raciness and freshness to the conceptions, which come from an experimental conviction of religious truth ; and accordingly I would suggest, that the most important part of theological education, even in this enlightened age, is not the communication of knowledge, essential as that is, but the conversion and exaltation of religious knowledge into a living, practical, and soul-kindling conviction. Much as the age requires intellectual culture in a minister, it requires still more, that his acquisitions of truth should be instinct with life and feeling ; that he should deliver his message not mechanically and ‘in the line of his profession,’ but with the sincerity and earnestness of a man bent on great effects ; that he should speak of God, of Christ, of the dignity and loveliness of christian virtue, of heaven and redemption, not as of traditions and historical records, about which he has only read, but as of realities which he understands and feels in the very depths of his soul.

III. The present is an age of free and earnest inquiry on the subject of religion, and consequently an age, in which the extremes of skepticism and bigotry, and a multiplicity of sects, and a diversity of interpretations of the sacred volume, must be expected ; and these circumstances of the times influence and modify the duties of the ministry. Free inquiry cannot exist without generating a degree of skepticism ; and against this influence, more disastrous than any error of any sect, a minister is bound to erect every barrier. The human mind by a natural reaction is undoubtedly tending, after its long vassalage, to licentious speculation. Men have begun to send keen, searching glances, into old institutions, whether of religion, literature, or policy ; and have de-

teeted so many abuses, that a suspicion of what is old has in many cases taken place of the veneration for antiquity. In such an age Christianity must be subjected to a rigid scrutiny. Church establishments and state patronage cannot screen it from investigation; and its ministers, far from being called to remove it from the bar of reason, where God has chosen that it should appear, are only bound to see that its claims be fairly and fully made known; and to this they are solemnly bound; and consequently it is one of their first duties, to search deeply and understand thoroughly the true foundations and evidences, on which the religion stands. Now it seems to me, that just in proportion as the human mind makes progress, the inward evidences of Christianity, the marks of divinity which it wears on its own brow, are becoming more and more important. I refer to the evidences which are drawn from its excellence, purity, and happy influences; from its adaptation to the spiritual wants, to the weakness and the greatness of human nature; from the original and unborrowed character, the greatness of soul, and the celestial loveliness of its founder; from its unbounded benevolence, corresponding with the spirit of the universe; and from its views of God's parental character and purposes, of human duty and perfection, and of a future state; views manifestly tending to the exaltation and perpetual improvement of our nature, yet wholly opposed to the character of the age in which they were unfolded. The historical and miraculous proofs of Christianity are indeed essential and impregnable; but, without superseding these, the inward proofs, of which I speak, are becoming more and more necessary, and exert a greater power, in proportion as the moral discernment and sensibilities of men are strengthened and enlarged. And if this be true, then

Christianity is endangered, and skepticism fortified, by nothing so much as by representations of the religion, which sully its native lustre and darken its inward signatures of a heavenly origin ; and accordingly the first and most solemn duty of its ministers, is, to rescue it from such perversions ; to see that it be not condemned for doctrines, for which it is in no respect responsible ; and to vindicate its character as eminently a rational religion, that is, a religion consistent with itself, with the great principles of human nature, with God's acknowledged attributes, and with those indestructible convictions, which spring almost instinctively from our moral constitution, and which grow stronger and stronger as the human mind is developed. A professed revelation, carrying contradiction on its front, and wounding those sentiments of justice and goodness, which are the highest tests of moral truth, cannot stand ; and those, who thus exhibit Christianity, however pure their aim, are shaking its foundations more deeply than its open and inveterate foes.

But free inquiry not only generates occasional skepticism, but much more a diversity of opinion among the believers of Christianity ; and to this the ministry must have a special adaptation. In such an age the ministry must in a measure be controversial. In particular, a minister, who after serious investigation attaches himself to that class of Christians, to which we of this religious society are known to belong, cannot but feel that the painful office of conflict with other denominations is laid upon him ; for, whilst we deny the Christian name to none who acknowledge Jesus as their Saviour and Lord, we do deliberately believe, that by many who confess him his religion is mournfully disfigured. We believe, that piety at present is robbed in no small degree of its

singleness, energy, and happiness, by the multiplication in the church of objects of supreme worship ; by the division of the one God into three persons, who sustain different relations to mankind ; and above all by the dishonorable views formed of the moral character and administration of the Deity. Errors relating to God seem to us among the most pernicious that can grow up among Christians ; for they darken, and, in the strong language of scripture, ‘ turn into blood,’ the Sun of the Spiritual Universe. Around just views of the Divine Character all truths and all virtues naturally gather ; and although some minds of native irrepressible vigor may rise to greatness, in spite of dishonorable conceptions of God, yet, as a general rule, human nature cannot spread to its just and full proportions under their appalling, enslaving, heart-withering control. We discover very plainly, as we think, in the frequent torpor of the conscience and heart in regard to religious obligation, the melancholy influences of that system, so prevalent among us, which robs our heavenly Father of his parental attributes. Indeed it seems impossible for the conscience, under such injurious representations of the divine character, to discharge intelligently its solemn office of enforcing love to God as man’s highest duty ; and accordingly when religious excitements take place under this gloomy system, they bear the marks of a morbid action, much more than of a healthy, restorative process of the moral nature.

These errors a minister of liberal views of Christianity will feel himself bound to withstand. But let me not be understood, as if I would have the ministry given chiefly to controversy, and would turn the pulpit into a battery for the perpetual assault of adverse sects. Oh no. Other strains than those of warfare should

predominate in this sacred place. A minister may be faithful to truth, without brandishing perpetually the weapons of controversy. Occasional discussions of disputed doctrines are indeed demanded by the zeal, with which error is maintained. But it becomes the preacher to remember, that there is a silent, indirect influence, more sure and powerful than direct assault on false opinions. The most effectual method of expelling error is, not to meet it sword in hand, but gradually to instil great truths, with which it cannot easily coexist, and by which the mind outgrows it. Men, who have been recovered from false systems, will generally tell you, that the first step of their deliverance was the admission of some principle, which seemed not to menace their past opinions, but which prepared the mind for the entrance of another and another truth, until they were brought, almost without suspecting it, to look on almost every doctrine of religion with other eyes, and in another and more generous light. The old superstitions about ghosts and dreams were not expelled by argument, for hardly a book was written against them; but men gradually outgrew them; and the spectres, which had haunted the terror-stricken soul for ages, fled before an improved philosophy, just as they were supposed to vanish before the rising sun. And in the same manner, the errors which disfigure Christianity, and from which no creed is free, are to yield to the growth of the human mind. Instead of spending his strength in tracking and refuting error, let the minister, who would serve the cause of truth, labor to gain and diffuse more and more enlarged and lofty views of our religion, of its nature, spirit, and end. Let him labor, to separate what is of universal and everlasting application from the local and the temporary; to penetrate beneath the letter to the

spirit; to detach the primary, essential, and all-comprehending principles of Christianity from the incrustations, accidental associations, and subordinate appendages by which they are often obscured; and to fix and establish these in men's minds as the standard by which more partial views are to be tried. Let him especially set forth the great moral purpose of Christianity; always teaching, that Christ came to deliver from the power still more than from the punishment of sin; that his most important operation is within us; and that the highest end of his mission, is the erection of God's throne in the soul, the inspiration of a fervent filial piety, a piety founded in confiding views of God's parental character, and manifested in a charity corresponding to God's unbounded and ever active love. In addition to these efforts, let him strive to communicate the just principles of interpreting the scriptures, that men, reading them more intelligently, may read them with new interest, and he will have discharged his chief duty in relation to controversy.

It is an interesting thought, that, through the influences now described, a sensible progress is taking place in men's conceptions of Christianity. It is a plain matter of fact, that the hard features of that religious system, which has been 'received by tradition from our fathers,' are greatly softened; and that a necessity is felt by those who hold it, of accomodating their representations of it more and more to the improved philosophy of the human mind and to the undeniable principles of natural and revealed religion. Unconditional Election is seldom heard of among us. The Imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity is hastening to join the exploded doctrine of Transubstantiation. The more revolting representations of man's state by

nature are judiciously kept out of sight ; and what is of still greater importance, preaching is incomparably more practical than formerly. And all these changes are owing, not to theological controversy, so much as to the general progress of the human mind. This progress is especially discernible in the diminished importance now ascribed to the outward parts of Christianity. Christians, having grown up to understand that their religion is a spirit and not a form, are beginning to feel the puerility as well as guilt of breaking Christ's followers into factions, on such questions as these, How much a Bishop differs from a Presbyter ? and, How great a quantity of water should be used in baptism ? And whilst they desire to ascertain the truth in these particulars, they look back on the uncharitable heat, with which these and similar topics were once discussed, with something of the wonder which they feel, on recollecting the violence of the Papists during the memorable debate, Whether the Virgin Mary were born with original sin ? It is a consoling and delightful thought, that God, who uses Christianity to advance civilisation and knowledge, makes use of this very advancement to bring back Christianity to a purer state, thus binding together and carrying forward by mutual action the cause of knowledge and the cause of religion, and strengthening perpetually their blended and blessed influences on human nature.

IV. The age is in many respects a corrupt one, and needs and demands in the ministry a spirit of reform. The age, I say, is corrupt ; not because I consider it as falling below the purity of past times, but because it is obviously and grossly defective, when measured by the christian standard and by the lights and advantages

which it enjoys. I know nothing to justify the cry of modern degeneracy, but rather incline to the belief, that here at least the sense of religion was never stronger than at present. In comparing different periods as to virtue and piety, regard must be had to difference of circumstances. It would argue little wisdom or candor, to expect the same freedom from luxury and dissipation in this opulent and flourishing community, as marked the first settlement of our country, when the inhabitants, scarcely sheltered from the elements, and almost wholly cut off from intercourse with the civilized world, could command little more than the necessities of life ; and yet it is through superficial comparisons in such particulars, that the past is often magnified at the expense of the present. I mean not to strike a balance between this age and former ones. I look on this age in the light of Christianity, as a minister ought to look upon it ; and whilst I see much to cheer and encourage, I see much to make a good man mourn, and to stir up Christ's servants to prayer and toil. That our increased comforts, improved arts, and overflowing prosperity, are often abused to licentiousness; that Christianity is with multitudes a mere name and form; that a practical atheism, which ascribes to nature and fortune the gifts and operations of God, and a practical infidelity, which lives and cares and provides only for the present state, abound on every side of us; that much, which is called morality, springs from a prudent balancing of the passions and a discreet regard to worldly interests; that there is an insensibility to God, which, if our own hearts were not infected by it, would shock and amaze us; that education, instead of guarding and rearing the moral and religious nature as its supreme care, often betrays and sacrifices it to accomplishments and acquisitions which

relate only to the present life ; that there is a mournful prevalence of dissoluteness among the young and of intemperance among the poor ; that the very religion of peace is made a torch of discord ; and that the fires of uncharitableness and bigotry, fires kindled from hell, often burn on altars consecrated to the true God ;—that such evils exist, who does not know ? What Christian can look round him and say, that the state of society corresponds to what men may and should be, under the light of the gospel, and in an age of advanced intelligence ? As for that man, who, on surveying the world, thinks its condition almost as healthy as can be desired or hoped ; who sees but a few superficial blots on the general aspect of society ; who thinks the ministry established for no higher end, than to perpetuate the present state of morals and religion ; whose heart is never burdened and sorrow-smitten by the fearful doom, to which multitudes around him are thoughtlessly hastening ; Oh let not that man take on him the care of souls. The physician, who should enter a hospital, to congratulate his dying patients on their pleasant sensations and rapid convalescence, would be as faithful to his trust, as the minister, who sees no deep moral maladies around him. No man is fitted to withstand great evils with energy, unless he be impressed by their greatness. No man is fitted to enter upon that warfare with moral evil, to which the ministry is set apart, who is not pained and pierced by its extent and woes ; who does not burn to witness and advance a great moral revolution in the world.

Am I told, that ‘romantic expectations of great changes in society will do more harm than good ; that the world will move along in its present course, let the ministry do what it may ; that we must take the present state as God has made it and not waste our strength in

useless lamentation for incurable evils?' I hold this language, though it takes the name of philosophy, to be wholly unwarranted by experience and revelation. If there be one striking feature in human nature, it is its susceptibility of improvement; and who is authorised to say, that the limit of christian improvement is reached? that whilst science and art, intellect and imagination, are extending their domains, the conscience and affections, the moral and religious principles of our nature, are incapable of increased power and elevation? Have we not pledges, in man's admiration of disinterested, heroic love; in his power of conceiving and thirsting for unattained heights of excellence; and in the splendor and sublimity of virtue already manifested in not a few who 'shine as lights' in the darkness of past ages, that man was created for perpetual moral and religious progress. True, the minister should not yield himself to romantic anticipations; for disappointment may deject him. Let him not expect to break in a moment chains of habit, which years have rivetted, or to bring back to immediate intimacy with God souls which have wandered long and far from him. This is romance; but there is something to be dreaded by the minister more than this; I mean that frigid tameness of mind, too common in christian teachers, which confounds the actual and the possible; which cannot burst the shackles of custom; which never kindles at the thought of great improvements of human nature; which is satisfied if religion receive an outward respect, and never dreams of enthroning it in men's souls; which looks on the strong holds of sin with despair; which utters by rote the solemn and magnificent language of the gospel without expecting it to 'work mightily'; which sees in the ministry a part of the mechanism of society, a useful

guardian of public order, but never suspects the powers with which it is armed by Christianity.

The ministry is indeed armed with great powers for great effects. The doctrines, which Christianity commits to its teachers, are mighty engines. The perfect character of God ; the tender and solemn attributes, which belong to him as our Father and Judge ; his purposes of infinite and everlasting mercy towards the human race ; the character and history of Christ ; his entire, self-immolating devotion to the cause of mankind ; his intimate union with his followers ; his sufferings, and cross, his resurrection, ascension, and intercession ; the promised aids of the Holy Spirit ; the immortality of man ; the retributions which await the unrepenting, and the felicities and glories of heaven, here are truths, able to move the whole soul and to war victoriously with its host of passions. The teacher, to whom are committed the infinite realities of the spiritual world, the sanctions of eternity, ‘the powers of the life to come,’ has instruments to work with, which turn to feebleness all other means of influence. There is not heard on earth a voice so powerful, so penetrating, as that of an enlightened minister, who, under the absorbing influence of these mighty truths, devotes himself a living sacrifice, a whole burnt offering, to the cause of enlightening and saving his fellow creatures.

No ; there is no romance in a minister’s proposing, and hoping to forward, a great moral revolution on the earth ; for the religion, which he is appointed to preach, was intended and is adapted to work deeply and widely, and to change the face of society. Christianity was not ushered into the world with such a stupendous preparation ; it was not foreshown through so many ages by enraptured prophets ; it was not proclaimed so joy-

fully by the songs of angels ; it was not preached by such holy lips and sealed by such precious blood, to be only a pageant, a form, a sound, a show. Oh no. It has come from heaven, with heaven's life and power,—come to ‘make all things new,’ to make ‘the wilderness glad and the desert blossom as the rose,’ to break the stony heart, to set free the guilt-burdened and earth-bound spirit, and to ‘present it faultless before God’s glory with exceeding joy.’ With courage and hope becoming such a religion, let the minister bring to his work his concentrated powers of intellect and affection, and God, in whose cause he labors, will accompany and crown the labor with an almighty blessing.

My brother, you are now to be set apart to the christian ministry. I bid you welcome to its duties, and implore for you strength to discharge them, a long and prosperous course, increasing success, and everlasting rewards. I also welcome you to the connexion which is this day formed between you and myself. I thank God for an associate, in whose virtues and endowments I have the promise of personal comfort and relief, and, still more, the pledges of usefulness to this people. I have lived too long, to expect unmixed good in this or in any relation of life ; nor am I ignorant of the difficulties and trials, which are thought to attend the union of different minds and different hands in the care of the same church. God grant us that singleness of purpose, that sincere concern for the salvation of our hearers, which will make the success of each the happiness of both. I know, for I have borne, the anxieties and sufferings which belong to the first years of the christian ministry, and I beg you to avail yourself of whatever aid my experience can give you. But no human aid can

lift every burden from your mind ; nor would the truest kindness desire for you exemption from the universal lot. May the discipline, which awaits you, give purity and loftiness to your motives ; give energy and tenderness to your character, and prepare you to minister to the wants of a tempted and afflicted world with that sympathy and wisdom, which fellowship in suffering can alone bestow. May you grow in grace, and in the spirit of the ministry, as you grow in years ; and when the voice which now speaks to you shall cease to be heard within these walls, may you, my brother, be left to enjoy and reward the confidence, to point out the path and the perils, to fortify the virtues, to animate the piety, to comfort the sorrows, to save the souls of this much loved people.

Brethren of this Christian Society ! I rejoice in the proof, which this day affords, of your desire to secure the administration of Christ's word and ordinances to yourselves and your children ; and I congratulate you on the prospects which it opens before you. The recollections, which rush upon my mind, of your sympathy and uninterrupted kindness through the vicissitudes of my health and the frequent suspensions of my labors, encourage me to anticipate for my young brother that kindness and candor, on which the happiness of a minister so much depends. I cannot ask for him sincerer attachment, than it has been my lot to enjoy. I remember, however, that the reciprocation of kind feelings is not the highest end of the ministry ; and accordingly my most earnest desire and prayer to God is, that with a new pastor, he may send you new influences of his spirit, and that, through our joint labors, Christianity, being rooted in your understandings and hearts, may

spring up into a rich harvest of universal goodness. May a more earnest concern for salvation, and a thirst for more generous improvement, be excited in your breasts. May a new life breathe through the worship of this house, and a new love join the hearts of the worshippers. May our ministry produce everlasting fruits; and on that great day, which will summon the teacher and the taught before the judgment seat of Christ, may you, my much loved and respected people, be 'our joy and crown'; and may we, when all hearts shall be revealed, be seen to have sought your good with unfeigned and disinterested love!



DISCOURSE

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL
UNITARIAN CHURCH. NEW YORK, 1826.

MARK XII. 29, §).

AND JESUS ANSWERED HIM, THE FIRST OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS IS
HEAR, O ISRAEL ; THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD.

AND THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND
WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND, AND WITH ALL THY
STRENGTH. THIS IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

WE have assembled to dedicate this building to the worship of the only living and true God, and to the teaching of the religion of his son, Jesus Christ. By this act we do not expect to confer on this spot of ground and these walls any peculiar sanctity or any mysterious properties. We do not suppose that, in consequence of rites now performed, the worship offered here will be more acceptable, than prayer uttered in the closet, or breathed from the soul in the midst of business ; or that the instructions delivered from this pulpit will be more effectual, than if they were uttered in a private dwelling or the open air. By dedication we understand only a solemn expression of the purpose for which this building is reared, joined with prayer to Him, who alone can crown our enterprise with success, that our design may be accepted and fulfilled. For this religious act we find, indeed, no precept in the New Testament, and on this account some have scrupled as to its propriety. But we are not among those who consider the written

word as a statute book, by the letter of which every step in life must be governed. We believe, on the other hand, that one of the great excellences of Christianity is, that it does not deal in minute regulation, but that, having given broad views of duty, and enjoined a pure and disinterested spirit, it leaves us to apply these rules and express this spirit, according to the promptings of the divine monitor within us, and according to the claims and exigencies of the ever varying conditions in which we are placed. We believe, too, that revelation is not intended to supersede God's other modes of instruction; that it is not intended to drown, but to make more audible, the voice of nature. Now nature dictates the propriety of such an act as we are this day assembled to perform. Nature has always taught men, on the completion of an important structure, designed for public and lasting good, to solemnize its first appropriation to the purpose for which it was reared, by some special service. To us there is a sacredness in this moral instinct, in this law written on the heart; and in listening reverently to God's dictates, however conveyed, we doubt not that we shall enjoy his acceptance and blessing.

I have said, we dedicate this building to the teaching of the gospel of Christ. But in the present state of the christian church, these words are not as definite as they one day will be. This gospel is variously interpreted. It is preached in various forms. Christendom is parcelled out into various sects. When, therefore, we see a new house of worship reared, the question immediately arises, To what mode of teaching Christianity is it to be devoted? I need not tell you, my hearers, that this house has been built by that class of Christians, who are called Unitarians, and that the gospel will here be

taught, as interpreted by that body of believers. This you all know ; but perhaps all present have not attached a very precise meaning to the word, by which our particular views of Christianity are designated. Unitarianism has been made a term of so much reproach, and has been uttered in so many tones of alarm, horror, indignation, and scorn, that to many it gives only a vague impression of something monstrous, impious, unutterably perilous. To such, I would say, that this doctrine, which is considered by some, as the last and most perfect invention of Satan, the consummation of his blasphemies, the most cunning weapon ever forged in the fires of hell, amounts to this—That there is One God, even the Father ; and that Jesus Christ is not this One God, but his son and messenger, who derived all his powers and glories from the Universal Parent, and who came into the world not to claim supreme homage for himself, but to carry up the soul to his Father as the Only Divine Person, the Only Ultimate Object of religious worship. To us, this doctrine seems not to have sprung from hell, but to have descended from the throne of God, and to invite and attract us thither. To us it seems to come from the scriptures, with a voice loud as the sound of many waters, and as articulate and clear as if Jesus, in a bodily form, were pronouncing it distinctly in our ears. To this doctrine, and to Christianity interpreted in consistency with it, we dedicate this building.

That we desire to propagate this doctrine, we do not conceal. It is a treasure, which we wish not to confine to ourselves, which we dare not lock up in our own breasts. We regard it as given to us for others, as well as for ourselves. We should rejoice to spread it through this great city, to carry it into every dwelling, and to send it far and wide to the remotest settlements of our country.

Am I asked, why we wish this diffusion? We dare not say, that we are in no degree influenced by sectarian feeling; for we see it raging around us, and we should be more than men, were we wholly to escape an epidemic passion. We do hope, however, that our main purpose and aim is not sectarian, but to promote a purer and nobler piety than now prevails. We are not induced to spread our opinions by the mere conviction that they are true; for there are many truths, historical, metaphysical, scientific, literary, which we have no anxiety to propagate. We regard them as the highest, most important, most efficient truths, and therefore demanding a firm testimony, and earnest efforts to make them known. In thus speaking, we do not mean, that we regard our peculiar views as essential to salvation. Far from us be this spirit of exclusion, the very spirit of antichrist, the worst of all the delusions of popery and of protestantism. We hold nothing to be essential, but the simple and supreme dedication of the mind, heart, and life to God and to his will. This inward and practical devotedness to the Supreme Being, we are assured, is attained and accepted under all the forms of Christianity. We believe, however, that it is favored by that truth which we maintain, as by no other system of faith. We regard Unitarianism as peculiarly the friend of inward, living, practical religion. For this we value it. For this we would spread it; and we desire none to embrace it, but such as shall seek and derive from it this celestial influence.

This character and property of Unitarian Christianity, its fitness to promote true, deep, and living piety, being our chief ground of attachment to it, and our chief motive for dedicating this house to its inculcation, I have thought proper to make this the topic of my

present discourse. I do not propose to prove the truth of Unitarianism by scriptural authorities, for this argument would exceed the limits of a sermon, but to show its superior tendency to form an elevated religious character. If, however, this position can be sustained, I shall have contributed no weak argument in support of the truth of our views; for the chief purpose of Christianity undoubtedly is, to promote piety, to bring us to God, to fill our souls with that Great Being, to make us alive to Him; and a religious system can carry no more authentic mark of a divine original, than its obvious, direct, and peculiar adaptation to quicken and raise the mind to its Creator.—In speaking thus of Unitarian Christianity as promoting piety, I ought to observe, that I use this word in its proper and highest sense. I mean not everything which bears the name of piety, for under this title superstition, fanaticism, and formality are walking abroad and claiming respect. I mean not an anxious frame of mind, not abject and slavish fear, not a dread of hell, not a repetition of forms, not church-going, not loud profession, not severe censure of others' irreligion; but filial love and reverence towards God, habitual gratitude, cheerful trust, ready obedience, and, though last not least, an imitation of the ever active and unbounded benevolence of the Creator.

The object of this discourse requires me to speak with great freedom of different systems of religion. But let me not be misunderstood. Let not the uncharitableness, which I condemn, be lightly laid to my charge. Let it be remembered, that I speak only of systems, not of those who embrace them. In setting forth with all simplicity what seem to me the good or bad tendencies of doctrines, I have not a thought of giving standards or measures by which to estimate the

virtue or vice of their professors. Nothing would be more unjust, than to decide on men's characters from their peculiarities of faith; and the reason is plain. Such peculiarities are not the only causes which impress and determine the mind. Our nature is exposed to innumerable other influences. If indeed a man were to know nothing but his creed, were to meet with no human beings but those who adopt it, were to see no example and to hear no conversation, but such as were formed by it; if his creed were to meet him everywhere, and to exclude every other object of thought; then his character might be expected to answer to it with great precision. But our Creator has not shut us up in so narrow a school. The mind is exposed to an infinite variety of influences, and these are multiplying with the progress of society. Education, friendship, neighbourhood, public opinion, the state of society, 'the genius of the place' where we live, books, events, the pleasures and business of life, the outward creation, our physical temperament, and innumerable other causes, are perpetually pouring in upon the soul thoughts, views, and emotions; and these influences are so complicated, so peculiarly combined in the case of every individual, and so modified by the original susceptibilities and constitution of every mind, that on no subject is there greater uncertainty than on the formation of character. To determine the precise operation of a religious opinion amidst this host of influences surpasses human power. A great truth may be completely neutralized by the countless impressions and excitements, which the mind receives from other sources; and so a great error may be disarmed of much of its power, by the superior energy of other and better views, of early habits, and of virtuous examples. Nothing is more common than to

see a doctrine believed without swaying the will. Its efficacy depends, not on the assent of the intellect, but on the place which it occupies in the thoughts, on the distinctness and vividness with which it is conceived, on its association with our common ideas, on its frequency of recurrence, and on its command of the attention, without which it has no life. Accordingly, pernicious opinions are not seldom held by men of the most illustrious virtue. I mean not then, in commending or condemning systems, to pass sentence on their professors. I know the power of the mind to select from a multifarious system, for its habitual use, those features or principles which are generous, pure, and ennobling, and by these, to sustain its spiritual life amidst the nominal profession of many errors. I know that a creed is one thing, as written in a book, and another, as it exists in the minds of its advocates. In the book, all the doctrines appear in equally strong and legible lines. In the mind, many are faintly traced and seldom recurred to, whilst others are inscribed as with sunbeams, and are the chosen, constant lights of the soul. Hence, in good men of opposing denominations, a real agreement may subsist as to their vital principles of faith ; and amidst the division of tongues, there may be unity of soul, and the same internal worship of God. By these remarks I do not mean, that error is not evil, or that it bears no pernicious fruit. Its tendencies are always bad. But I mean, that these tendencies exert themselves amidst so many counteracting influences ; and that injurious opinions so often lie dead, through the want of mixture with the common thoughts, through the mind's not absorbing them, and changing them into its own substance ; that the highest respect may, and ought to be cherished for men, in whose creed we find

much to disapprove. In this discourse I shall speak freely, and some may say severely, of Trinitarianism; but I love and honor not a few of its advocates; and in opposing what I deem their error, I would on no account detract from their worth. After these remarks, I hope that the language of earnest discussion and strong conviction will not be construed into the want of that charity, which I acknowledge as the first grace of our religion.

I now proceed to illustrate and prove the superiority of Unitarian Christianity, as a means of promoting a deep and noble piety.

I. Unitarianism is a system most favorable to piety, because it presents to the mind One, and only one, Infinite Person, to whom supreme homage is to be paid. It does not weaken the energy of religious sentiment by dividing it among various objects. It collects and concentrates the soul on One Father of unbounded, undivided, unrivalled glory. To Him it teaches the mind to rise through all beings. Around Him it gathers all the splendors of the universe. To Him it teaches us to ascribe whatever good we receive or behold, the beauty and magnificence of nature, the liberal gifts of providence, the capacities of the soul, the bonds of society, and especially the riches of grace and redemption, the mission, and powers, and beneficent influences of Jesus Christ. All happiness it traces up to the Father, as the sole source; and the mind, which these views have penetrated, through this intimate association of everything exciting and exalting in the universe with One Infinite Parent, can and does offer itself up to him with the intensest and profoundest love, of which human nature is susceptible. The Trinitarian indeed professes to believe in one God and means to hold fast this truth. But

three persons, having distinctive qualities and relations, of whom one is sent and another the sender, one is given and another the giver, of whom one intercedes and another hears the intercession, of whom one takes flesh, and another never becomes incarnate, three persons, thus discriminated, are as truly three objects of the mind, as if they were acknowledged to be separate divinities; and from the principles of our nature, they cannot act on the mind as deeply and powerfully as One Infinite Person, to whose sole goodness all happiness is ascribed. To multiply infinite objects for the heart, is to distract it. To scatter the attention among three equal persons, is to impair the power of each. The more strict and absolute the unity of God, the more easily and intimately all the impressions and emotions of piety flow together, and are condensed into one glowing thought, one thrilling love. No language can express the absorbing energy of the thought of one Infinite Father. When vitally implanted in the soul, it grows and gains strength forever. It enriches itself by every new view of God's word and works; gathers tribute from all regions and all ages; and attracts into itself all the rays of beauty, glory, and joy, in the material and spiritual creation.

My hearers, as you would feel the full influence of God upon your souls, guard sacredly, keep unobscured and unsullied, that fundamental and glorious truth, that there is One, and only One Almighty Agent in the universe, One Infinite Father. Let this truth dwell in me in its uncorrupted simplicity, and I have the spring and nutriment of an ever growing piety. I have an object for my mind towards which all things bear me. I know whither to go in all trial, whom to bless in all joy, whom to adore in all I behold. But let three persons claim

from me supreme homage, and claim it on different grounds, one for sending and another for coming to my relief, and I am divided, distracted, perplexed. My frail intellect is overborne. Instead of One Father, on whose arm I can rest, my mind is torn from object to object, and I tremble, lest, among so many claimants of supreme love, I should withhold from one or another his due.

II. Unitarianism is the system most favorable to piety, because it holds forth and preserves inviolate the spirituality of God. ‘God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.’ It is of great importance to the progress and elevation of the religious principle, that we should refine more and more our conceptions of God ; that we should separate from him all material properties, and whatever is limited or imperfect in our own nature ; that we should regard him as a pure intelligence, an unmixed and infinite Mind. When it pleased God to select the Jewish people and place them under miraculous interpositions, one of the first precepts given them was, that they should not represent God under any bodily form, any graven image, or the likeness of any creature. Next came Christianity, which had this as one of its great objects, to render religion still more spiritual, by abolishing the ceremonial and outward worship of former times, and by discarding those grosser modes of describing God, through which the ancient prophets had sought to impress an unrefined people.

Now Unitarianism concurs with this sublime moral purpose of God. It asserts his spirituality. It approaches him under no bodily form, but as a pure spirit, as the infinite and universal Mind. On the other hand, it is the direct influence of Trinitarianism to materialize men’s conceptions of God ; and, in truth, this system is

a relapse into the error of the rudest and earliest ages, into the worship of a corporeal God. Its leading feature is, the doctrine of a God clothed with a body, and acting and speaking through a material frame,—of the Infinite Divinity dying on a cross ; a doctrine, which in earthliness reminds us of the mythology of the rudest pagans, and which a pious Jew, in the twilight of the Mosaic religion, would have shrunk from with horror. It seems to me no small objection to the Trinity, that it supposes God to take a body in the later and more improved ages of the world, when it is plain, that such a manifestation, if needed at all, was peculiarly required in the infancy of the race. The effect of such a system in debasing the idea of God, in associating with the Divinity human passions and infirmities, is too obvious to need much elucidation. On the supposition that the second person of the Trinity became incarnate, God may be said to be a material being, on the same general ground, on which this is affirmed of man ; for man is material only by the union of the mind with the body ; and the very meaning of incarnation is, that God took a body, through which he acted and spoke, as the human soul operates through its corporeal organs. Every bodily affection may thus be ascribed to God. Accordingly the Trinitarian, in his most solemn act of adoration, is heard to pray in these appalling words : ‘ Good Lord, deliver us ; by the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumcision, by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation, by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, good Lord, deliver us.’ Now I ask you to judge, from the principles of human nature, whether to worshippers, who adore their God for his wounds and tears, his agony, and blood, and sweat, the ideas of corporeal existence and human suf-

fering will not predominate over the conceptions of a purely spiritual essence ; whether the mind, in clinging to the man, will not lose the God ; whether a surer method for depressing and adulterating the pure thought of the Divinity could have been devised. ... That the Trinitarian is unconscious of this influence of his faith, I know, nor do I charge it on him as a crime. Still it exists and cannot be too much deplored.

The Roman Catholics, true to human nature and their creed, have sought, by painting and statuary, to bring their imagined God before their eyes ; and have thus obtained almost as vivid impressions of him, as if they had lived with him on the earth. The Protestant condemns them for using these similitudes and representations in their worship ; but if a Trinitarian, he does so to his own condemnation. For if, as he believes, it was once a duty to bow in adoration before the living body of his incarnate God, what possible guilt can there be in worshipping before the pictured or sculptured memorial of the same being ? Christ's body may as truly be represented by the artist, as any other human form ; and its image may be used as effectually and properly, as that of an ancient sage or hero, to recall him with vividness to the mind.—Is it said, that God has expressly forbidden the use of images in our worship ? But why was that prohibition laid on the Jews ? For this express reason, that God had not presented himself to them in any form, which admitted of representation. Hear the language of Moses : ‘ Take good heed lest ye make unto you a graven image, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.’* If, since that

* Deut. iv. 15, 16.—The arrangement of the text is a little changed, to put the reader immediately in possession of the meaning.

period, God has taken a body, then the reason of the prohibition has ceased; and if he took a body, among other purposes, that he might assist the weakness of the intellect, which needs a material form, then a statue, which lends so great an aid to the conception of an absent friend, is not only justified, but seems to be required.

This materializing and embodying of the Supreme Being, which is the essence of Trinitarianism, cannot but be adverse to a growing and exalted piety. Human and divine properties, being confounded in one being, lose their distinctness. The splendors of the Godhead are dimmed. The worshippers of an incarnate Deity, through the frailty of their nature, are strongly tempted to fasten chiefly on his human attributes; and their devotion, instead of rising to the Infinite God, and taking the peculiar character which Infinity inspires, becomes rather a human affection, borrowing much of its fervor from the ideas of suffering, blood, and death. It is indeed possible, that this God-man (to use the strange phraseology of Trinitarians) may excite the mind more easily, than a purely spiritual divinity; just as a tragedy, addressed to the eye and ear, will interest the multitude more than the contemplation of the most exalted character. But the emotions, which are the most easily roused, are not the profoundest or most enduring. This human love, inspired by a human God, though at first more servid, cannot grow and spread through the soul, like the reverential attachment, which an infinite, spiritual Father awakens. Refined conceptions of God, though more slowly attained, have a more quickening and all-pervading energy, and admit of perpetual accessions of brightness, life, and strength.

True, we shall be told, that Trinitarianism has converted only one of its three persons into a human Deity, and that the other two remain purely spiritual beings. But who does not know, that man will attach himself most strongly to the God who has become a man? Is not this even a duty, if the Divinity has taken a body to place himself within the reach of human comprehension and sympathy? That the Trinitarian's views of the Divinity will be colored more by his visible, tangible, corporeal God, than by those persons of the Trinity, who remain comparatively hidden in their invisible and spiritual essence, is so accordant with the principles of our nature, as to need no labored proof.

My friends, hold fast the doctrine of a purely spiritual divinity. It is one of the great supports and instruments of a vital piety. It brings God near, as no other doctrine can. One of the leading purposes of Christianity, is to give us an ever growing sense of God's immediate presence, a consciousness of him in our souls. Now just as far as corporeal or limited attributes enter into our conception of him, we remove him from us. He becomes an outward, distant being, instead of being viewed and felt as dwelling in the soul itself. It is an unspeakable benefit of the doctrine of a purely spiritual God, that he can be regarded as inhabiting, filling our spiritual nature; and through this union with our minds, he can and does become the object of an intimacy and friendship, such as no embodied being can call forth.

III. Unitarianism is the system most favorable to piety, because it presents a distinct and intelligible object of worship, a being, whose nature, whilst inexpressibly sublime, is yet simple and suited to human apprehension. An infinite Father is the most exalted

of all conceptions, and yet the least perplexing. It involves no incongruous ideas. It is illustrated by analogies from our own nature. It coincides with that fundamental law of the intellect, through which we demand a cause proportioned to effects. It is also as interesting as it is rational; so that it is peculiarly congenial with the improved mind. The sublime simplicity of God, as he is taught in Unitarianism, by relieving the understanding from perplexity, and by placing him within the reach of thought and affection, gives him peculiar power over the soul. Trinitarianism, on the other hand, is a riddle. Men call it a mystery; but it is mysterious, not like the great truths of religion, by its vastness and grandeur, but by the irreconcilable ideas which it involves. One God, consisting of three persons or agents, is so strange a being, so unlike our own minds, and all others with which we hold intercourse, is so misty, so incongruous, so contradictory, that he cannot be apprehended with that distinctness and that feeling of reality, which belong to the opposite system. Such a heterogeneous being, who is at the same moment one and many; who includes in his own nature the relations of Father and Son, or, in other words, is Father and Son to himself; who, in one of his persons, is at the same moment the supreme God and a mortal man, omniscient and ignorant, almighty and impotent; such a being is certainly the most puzzling and distracting object ever presented to human thought. Trinitarianism, instead of teaching an intelligible God, offers to the mind a strange compound of hostile attributes, bearing plain marks of those ages of darkness, when Christianity shed but a faint ray, and the diseased fancy teemed with prodigies and unnatural creations. In contemplating a being, who presents

such different and inconsistent aspects, the mind finds nothing to rest upon ; and instead of receiving distinct and harmonious impressions, is disturbed by shifting, unsettled images. To commune with such a being must be as hard, as to converse with a man of three different countenances, speaking with three different tongues. The believer in this system must forget it, when he prays, or he could find no repose in devotion. Who can compare it in distinctness, reality, and power, with the simple doctrine of 'One Infinite Father' ?

IV. Unitarianism promotes a fervent and enlightened piety, by asserting the absolute and unbounded perfection of God's character. This is the highest service which can be rendered to mankind. Just and generous conceptions of the Divinity are the soul's true wealth. To spread these, is to contribute more effectually, than by any other agency, to the progress and happiness of the intelligent creation. To obscure God's glory is to do greater wrong, than to blot out the sun. The character and influence of a religion must answer to the views which it gives of the Divinity ; and there is a plain tendency in that system, which manifests the divine perfections most resplendently, to awaken the sublimest and most blessed piety.

Now Trinitarianism has a fatal tendency to degrade the character of the Supreme Being, though its advocates, I am sure, intend no such wrong. By multiplying divine persons, it takes from each the glory of independent, all-sufficient, absolute perfection. This may be shown in various particulars. And in the first place, the very idea, that three persons in the divinity are in any degree important, implies and involves the imperfection of each ; for it is plain, that if one divine person possesses all possible power, wisdom, love, and happiness,

nothing will be gained to himself or to the creation by joining with him two, or two hundred other persons. To say that he needs others for any purpose or in any degree, is to strip him of independent and all-sufficient majesty. If our Father in Heaven, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not of himself sufficient to all the wants of his creation ; if, by his union with other persons, he can accomplish any good to which he is not of himself equal ; or if he thus acquires a claim to the least degree of trust or hope, to which he is not of himself entitled by his own independent attributes ; then it is plain, he is not a being of infinite and absolute perfection. Now Trinitarianism teaches, that the highest good accrues to the human race from the existence of three divine persons, sustaining different offices and relations to the world ; and it regards the Unitarian, as subverting the foundation of human hope, by asserting that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is alone and singly God. Thus it derogates from his infinite glory.

In the next place, Trinitarianism degrades the character of the Supreme Being, by laying its disciples under the necessity of making such a distribution of offices and relations among the three persons, as will serve to designate and distinguish them ; for in this way it interferes with the sublime conceptions of One Infinite Person, in whom all glories are concentrated. If we are required to worship three persons, we must view them in different lights, or they will be mere repetitions of each other, mere names and sounds, presenting no objects, conveying no meaning to the mind. Some appropriate character, some peculiar acts, feelings, and relations must be ascribed to each. In other words, the glory of all must be shorn, that some special distin-

guishing lustre may be thrown on each. Accordingly, creation is associated peculiarly with the conception of the Father; satisfaction for human guilt with that of the Son; whilst sanctification, the noblest work of all, is given to the Holy Spirit as his more particular work. By a still more fatal distribution, the work of justice, the office of vindicating the rights of the Divinity, falls peculiarly to the Father, whilst the loveliness of interposing mercy clothes peculiarly the person of the Son. By this unhappy influence of Trinitarianism, from which common minds at least cannot escape, the splendors of the Godhead, being scattered among three objects, instead of being united in One Infinite Father, are dimmed; and he, whose mind is thoroughly and practically possessed by this system, can hardly conceive the effulgence of glory in which the One God offers himself to a pious believer in his strict unity.

But the worst has not been told. I observe, then, in the third place, that if Three Divine Persons are believed in, such an administration or government of the world must be ascribed to them, as will furnish them with a sphere of operation. No man will admit three persons into his creed, without finding a use for them. Now it is an obvious remark, that a system of the universe, which involves and demands more than one Infinite Agent, must be wild, extravagant, and unworthy the perfect God; because there is no possible or conceivable good, to which such an agent is not adequate. Accordingly we find Trinitarianism connecting itself with a scheme of administration, exceedingly derogatory to the divine character. It teaches, that the Infinite Father saw fit to put into the hands of our first parents the character and condition of their whole progeny; and that, through one act of disobedience, the whole race

bring with them into being a corrupt nature, or are born depraved. It teaches, that the offences of a short life, though begun and spent under this disastrous influence, merit endless punishment, and that God's law threatens this infinite penalty ; and that man is thus burdened with a guilt, which no sufferings of the created universe can expiate, which nothing but the sufferings of an Infinite Being can purge away. In this condition of human nature, Trinitarianism finds a sphere of action for its different persons. I am aware that some Trinitarians, on hearing this statement of their system, may reproach me with ascribing to them the errors of Calvinism, a system which they abhor as much as ourselves. But none of the peculiarities of Calvinism enter into this exposition. I have given what I understand to be the leading features of Trinitarianism all the world over ; and the benevolent professors of that faith, who recoil from this statement, must blame not the preacher, but the creeds and establishments by which these doctrines are diffused. For ourselves, we look with horror and grief on the views of God's government, which are naturally and intimately united with Trinitarianism. They take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute a stern and unjust lord. Our filial love and reverence rise up against them. We say to the Trinitarian, touch anything but the perfections of God. Cast no stain on that spotless purity and loveliness. We can endure any errors but those, which subvert or unsettle the conviction of God's paternal goodness. Urge not upon us a system, which makes existence a curse, and wraps the universe in gloom. Leave us the cheerful light, the free and healthful atmosphere, of a liberal and rational faith ; the ennobling and consoling influences of the doctrine, which nature and revelation in blessed concord

teach us, of One Father of Unbounded and Inexhaustible Love.

V. Unitarianism is peculiarly favorable to piety, because it accords with nature, with the world around and the world within us ; and through this accordance it gives aid to nature, and receives aid from it, in impressing the mind with God. We live in the midst of a glorious universe, which was meant to be a witness and a preacher of the Divinity ; and a revelation from God may be expected to be in harmony with this system, and to carry on a common ministry with it in lifting the soul to God. Now Unitarianism is in accordance with nature. It teaches One Father, and so does creation, the more it is explored. Philosophy, in proportion as it extends its views of the universe, sees in it, more and more, a sublime and beautiful unity, and multiplies proofs, that all things have sprung from one intelligence, one power, one love. The whole outward creation proclaims to the Unitarian the truth in which he delights. So does his own soul. But neither nature nor the soul bears one trace of Three Divine Persons. Nature is no Trinitarian. It gives not a hint, not a glimpse of a tri-personal author. Trinitarianism is a confined system, shut up in a few texts, a few written lines, where many of the wisest minds have failed to discover it. It is not inscribed on the heavens and the earth, not borne on every wind, not resounding and re-echoing through the universe. The sun and stars say nothing of a God of three persons. They all speak of the One Father whom we adore. To our ears, one and the same voice comes from God's word and works, a full and swelling strain, growing clearer, louder, more thrilling as we listen, and with one blessed influence lifting up our souls to the Almighty Father.

This accordance between nature and revelation increases the power of both over the mind. Concurring as they do in one impression, they make that impression deeper. To men of reflection, the conviction of the reality of religion is exceedingly heightened, by a perception of harmony in the views of it which they derive from various sources. Revelation is never received with so intimate a persuasion of its truth, as when it is seen to conspire to the same ends and impressions, for which all other things are made. It is no small objection to Trinitarianism, that it is an insulated doctrine, that it reveals a God whom we meet nowhere in the universe. Three Divine Persons, I repeat it, are found only in a few texts, and those so dark, that the gifted minds of Milton, Newton, and Locke could not find them there. Nature gives them not a whisper of evidence. And can they be as real and powerful to the mind, as that One Father, whom the general strain and common voice of Scripture, and the universal voice of nature call us to adore?

VI. Unitarianism favors piety by opening the mind to new and ever enlarging views of God. Teaching, as it does, the same God with nature, it leads us to seek him in nature. It does not shut us up in the written word, precious as that manifestation of the Divinity is. It considers revelation, not as independent on his other means of instruction; not as a separate agent; but as a part of the great system of God for enlightening and elevating the human soul; as intimately joined with creation and providence, and intended to concur with them; and as given to assist us in reading the volume of the universe. Thus Unitarianism, where its genuine influence is experienced, tends to enrich and fertilize the mind; opens it to new lights, wherever they spring

up ; and by combining, makes more efficient, the means of religious knowledge. Trinitarianism, on the other hand, is a system which tends to confine the mind ; to shut it up in what is written ; to diminish its interest in the universe ; and to disincline it to bright and enlarged views of God's works.—This effect will be explained, in the first place, if we consider, that the peculiarities of Trinitarianism differ so much from the teachings of the universe, that he, who attaches himself to the one, will be in danger of losing his interest in the other. The ideas of Three Divine Persons, of God clothing himself in flesh, of the infinite Creator saving the guilty by transferring their punishment to an innocent being, these ideas cannot easily be made to coalesce in the mind with that, which nature gives, of One Almighty Father and Unbounded Spirit, whom no worlds can contain, and whose vicegerent in the human breast pronounces it a crime, to lay the penalties of vice on the pure and unoffending.

But Trinitarianism has a still more positive influence in shutting the mind against improving views from the universe. It tends to throw gloom over God's works. Imagining that Christ is to be exalted, by giving him an exclusive agency in enlightening and recovering mankind, it is tempted to disparage other lights and influences ; and for the purpose of magnifying his salvation, it inclines to exaggerate the darkness and desperateness of man's present condition. The mind, thus impressed, naturally leans to those views of nature and of society, which will strengthen the ideas of desolation and guilt. It is tempted to aggravate the miseries of life, and to see in them only the marks of divine displeasure and punishing justice ; and overlooks their obvious fitness and design to awaken our powers, exercise our virtues,

and strengthen our social ties. In like manner it exaggerates the sins of men, that the need of an Infinite atonement may be maintained. Some of the most affecting tokens of God's love within and around us are obscured by this gloomy theology. The glorious faculties of the soul, its high aspirations, its sensibility to the great and good in character, its sympathy with disinterested and suffering virtue, its benevolent and religious instincts, its thirst for a happiness not found on earth, these are overlooked or thrown into the shade, that they may not disturb the persuasion of man's natural corruption. Ingenuity is employed to disparage what is interesting in the human character. Whilst the bursts of passion in the newborn child are gravely urged, as indications of a native rooted corruption; its bursts of affection, its sweet smile, its innocent and irrepressible joy, its loveliness and beauty, are not listened to, though they plead more eloquently its alliance with higher natures. The sacred and tender affections of home; the unwearied watchings and cheerful sacrifices of parents; the reverential, grateful assiduity of children, smoothing an aged father's or mother's descent to the grave; woman's love, stronger than death; the friendship of brothers and sisters; the anxious affection, which tends around the bed of sickness; the subdued voice, which breathes comfort into the mourner's heart; all the endearing offices, which shed a serene light through our dwellings; these are explained away by the thorough advocates of this system, so as to include no real virtue, so as to consist with a natural aversion to goodness. Even the higher efforts of disinterested benevolence and the most unaffected expressions of piety, if not connected with what is called 'the true faith,' are, by the most rigid disciples of the doctrine which I

oppose, resolved into the passion for distinction, or some other working of ‘unsanctified nature.’ Thus Trinitarianism and its kindred doctrines have a tendency to veil God’s goodness, to sully his fairest works, to dim the lustre of those innocent and pure affections, which a divine breath kindles in the soul, to blight the beauty and freshness of creation, and in this way to consume the very nutriment of piety. We know, and rejoice to know, that in multitudes this tendency is counteracted by a cheerful temperament, a benevolent nature, and a strength of gratitude, which bursts the shackles of a melancholy system. But from the nature of the doctrine, the tendency exists and is strong ; and an impartial observer will often discern it resulting in gloomy, depressing views of life and the universe.

Trinitarianism, by thus tending to exclude bright and enlarging views of the creation, seems to me not only to chill the heart, but to injure the understanding, as far as moral and religious truth is concerned. It does not send the mind far and wide for new and elevating objects ; and we have here one explanation of the barrenness and feebleness, by which theological writings are so generally marked. It is not wonderful, that the prevalent theology should want vitality and enlargement of thought, for it does not accord with the perfections of God and the spirit of the universe. It has not its root in eternal truth ; but is a narrow, technical, artificial system, the fabrication of unrefined ages, and consequently incapable of being blended with the new lights which are spreading over the most interesting subjects, and of being incorporated with the results and anticipations of original and progressive minds. It stands apart in the mind, instead of seizing upon new truths, and converting them into its own nutriment. With few

exceptions, the Trinitarian theology of the present day is greatly deficient in freshness of thought, and in power to awaken the interest and to meet the intellectual and spiritual wants of thinking men. I see indeed superior minds and great minds among the adherents of the prevalent system ; but they seem to me to move in chains, and to fulfil poorly their high function of adding to the wealth of the human intellect. In theological discussion, they remind me more of Samson grinding in the narrow mill of the Philistines, than of that undaunted champion achieving victories for God's people, and enlarging the bounds of their inheritance. Now a system, which has a tendency to confine the mind, and to impair its sensibility to the manifestations of God, in the universe, is so far unfriendly to piety, to a bright, joyous, hopeful, ever growing love of the Creator. It tends to generate and nourish a religion of a melancholy tone, such, I apprehend, as now predominates in the christian world.

VII. Unitarianism promotes piety by the high place, which it assigns to piety in the character and work of Jesus Christ. What is it which the Unitarian regards as the chief glory of the character of Christ ? I answer, his filial devotion, the entireness with which he surrendered himself to the will and benevolent purposes of God. The piety of Jesus, which, on the supposition of his Supreme Divinity, is a subordinate and incongruous, is, to us, his prominent and crowning, attribute. We place his 'oneness with God,' not in an unintelligible unity of essence, but in unity of mind and heart, in the strength of his love, through which he renounced every separate interest, and identified himself with his Father's designs. In other words, filial piety, the consecration of his whole being to the benevolent

will of his Father, this is the mild glory in which he always offers himself to our minds ; and, of consequence, all our sympathies with him, all our love and veneration towards him, are so many forms of delight in a pious character, and our whole knowledge of him incites us to a like surrender of our whole nature and existence to God.

In the next place, Unitarianism teaches, that the highest work or office of Christ is to call forth and strengthen piety in the human breast, and thus it sets before us this character as the chief acquisition and end of our being. To us, the great glory of Christ's mission consists in the power, with which he 'reveals the Father,' and establishes the 'kingdom or reign of God within' the soul. By the crown, which he wears, we understand the eminence which he enjoys in the most beneficent work in the universe, that of bringing back the lost mind to the knowledge, love, and likeness of its Creator. With these views of Christ's office, nothing can seem to us so important as an enlightened and profound piety, and we are quickened to seek it, as the perfection and happiness, to which nature and redemption jointly summon us.

Now we maintain, that Trinitarianism obscures and weakens these views of Christ's character and work ; and this it does, by insisting perpetually on others of an incongruous, discordant nature. It diminishes the power of his piety. Making him, as it does, the Supreme Being, and placing him as an equal on his Father's throne, it turns the mind from him as the meekest worshipper of God ; throws into the shade, as of very inferior worth, his self-denying obedience ; and gives us other grounds for revering him, than his entire homage, his fervent love, his cheerful self-sacrifice to the

Universal Parent. There is a plain incongruity in the belief of his Supreme Godhead with the ideas of filial piety and exemplary devotion. The mind, which has been taught to regard him as of equal majesty and authority with the Father, cannot easily feel the power of his character as the affectionate son, whose meat it was to do his Father's will. The mind, accustomed to make him the Ultimate Object of worship, cannot easily recognise in him the pattern of that worship, the guide to the Most High. The characters are incongruous, and their union perplexing, so that neither exerts its full energy on the mind.

Trinitarianism also exhibits the work, as well as character of Christ, in lights less favorable to piety. It does not make the promotion of piety his chief end. It teaches, that the highest purpose of his mission was to reconcile God to man, not man to God. It teaches, that the most formidable obstacle to human happiness lies in the claims and threatenings of divine justice. Hence it leads men to prize Christ more, for answering these claims and averting these threatenings, than for awakening in the human soul sentiments of love towards its Father in heaven. Accordingly, multitudes seem to prize pardon more than piety, and think it a greater boon to escape, through Christ's sufferings, the fire of hell, than to receive, through his influence, the spirit of heaven, the spirit of devotion. Is such a system propitious to a generous and evergrowing piety?

If I may be allowed a short digression, I would conclude this head with the general observation, that we deem our views of Jesus Christ more interesting than those of Trinitarianism. We feel that we should lose much, by exchanging the distinct character and mild radiance, with which he offers himself to our minds, for

the confused and irreconcilable glories with which that system labors to invest him. According to Unitarianism, he is a being who may be understood, for he is one mind, one conscious nature. According to the opposite faith, he is an inconceivable compound of two most dissimilar minds, joining in one person a finite and infinite nature, a soul weak and ignorant, and a soul almighty and omniscient. And is such a being a proper object for human thought and affection? — I add, as another important consideration, that to us Jesus, instead of being the second of three obscure unintelligible persons, is first and preeminent in the sphere in which he acts, and is thus the object of a distinct attachment, which he shares with no equals or rivals. To us, he is first of the sons of God, the Son by peculiar nearness and likeness to the Father. He is first of all the ministers of God's mercy and beneficence, and through him the largest stream of bounty flows to the creation. He is first in God's favor and love, the most accepted of worshippers, the most prevalent of intercessors. In this mighty universe, framed to be a mirror of its author, we turn to Jesus as the brightest image of God, and gratefully yield him a place in our souls, second only to the Infinite Father, to whom he himself directs our supreme affection.

VIII. I now proceed to a great topic. Unitarianism promotes piety, by meeting the wants of man as a sinner. The wants of the sinner may be expressed almost in one word. He wants assurances of mercy in his Creator. He wants pledges, that God is Love in its purest form, that is, that He has a goodness so disinterested, free, full, strong, and immutable, that the ingratitude and disobedience of his creatures cannot overcome it. This unconquerable love, which in Scripture

brief replies. And first, this doctrine of an Infinite satisfaction, or, as it is improperly called, of an Infinite atonement, subverts, instead of building up, hope ; because it argues infinite severity in the government which requires it. Did I believe, what Trinitarianism teaches, that not the least transgression, not even the first sin of the dawning mind of the child, could be remitted without an infinite expiation, I should feel myself living under a legislation unspeakably dreadful, under laws written, like Draco's, in blood ; and instead of thanking the sovereign for providing an infinite substitute, I should shudder at the attributes, which render this expedient necessary. It is commonly said, that an infinite atonement is needed to make due and deep impressions of the evil of sin. But he, who framed all souls and gave them their susceptibilities, ought not to be thought so wanting in goodness and wisdom, as to have constituted a universe, which demands so dreadful and degrading a method of enforcing obedience, as the penal sufferings of a God. This doctrine of an Infinite substitute, suffering the penalty of sin, to manifest God's wrath against sin, and thus to support his government, is, I fear, so familiar to us all, that its severe character is overlooked. Let me then set it before you, in new terms, and by a new illustration ; and if in so doing, I may wound the feelings of some who hear me, I beg them to believe, that I do it with pain, and from no impulse but a desire to serve the cause of truth.— Suppose, then, that a teacher should come among you, and should tell you, that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, had erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in room of the offenders, an Infinite Being, the partaker of his own Supreme Divinity ; suppose him to declare,

that this execution was appointed, as a most conspicuous and terrible manifestation of God's justice, and of the infinite wo denounced by his law ; and suppose him to add, that all beings in heaven and earth are required to fix their eyes on this fearful sight, as the most powerful enforcement of obedience and virtue. Would you not tell him, that he calumniated his Maker ? Would you not say to him, that this central gallows threw gloom over the universe ; that the spirit of a government, whose very acts of pardon were written in such blood, was terror, not paternal love ; and that the obedience, which needed to be upheld by this horrid spectacle, was nothing worth ? Would you not say to him, that even you, in this infaney and imperfection of your being, were capable of being wrought upon by nobler motives, and of hating sin through more generous views ; and that much more the angels, those pure flames of love, need not the gallows and an executed God, to confirm their loyalty ? You would all so feel at such teaching as I have supposed ; and yet how does this differ from the popular doctrine of atonement ? According to this doctrine, we have an Infinite Being sentenced to suffer as a substitute the death of the cross, a punishment more ignominious and agonizing than the gallows, a punishment reserved for slaves and the vilest malefactors ; and he suffers this punishment, that he may show forth the terrors of God's law, and strike a dread of sin through the universe.—I am indeed aware that multitudes, who profess this doctrine, are not accustomed to bring it to their minds distinctly in this light ; that they do not ordinarily regard the death of Christ, as a criminal execution, as an infinitely dreadful infliction of justice, as intended to show, that, without an infinite satisfaction, they must hope noth-

ing from God. Their minds turn by a generous instinct from these appalling views, to the love, the disinterestedness, the moral grandeur and beauty of the sufferer ; and through such thoughts they make the cross a source of peace, gratitude, love, and hope ; thus affording a delightful exemplification of the power of the human mind to attach itself to what is good and purifying in the most irrational system. Not a few may shudder at the illustration which I have here given ; but in what respects it is unjust to the popular doctrine of atonement, I cannot discern. I grieve to shock sincere Christians, of whatever name ; but I grieve more for the corruption of our common faith, which I have now felt myself bound to expose.

I have a second objection to this doctrine of Infinite atonement. When examined minutely, and freed from ambiguous language, it vanishes into air. It is wholly delusion. The Trinitarian tells me, that, according to his system, we have an infinite substitute ; that the Infinite God was pleased to bear our punishment, and consequently, that pardon is made sure. But I ask him, Do I understand you ? Do you mean that the Great God, who never changes, whose happiness is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, that this Eternal Being really bore the penalty of my sins, really suffered and died ? Every pious man, when pressed by this question, answers, No. What then does the doctrine of Infinite atonement mean ? Why, this ; that God took into union with himself our nature, that is, a human body and soul ; and these bore the suffering for our sins ; and, through his union with these, God may be said to have borne it himself. Thus this vaunted system goes out—in words. The Infinite victim proves to be a frail man, and God's share in the sacrifice is a

mere fiction. I ask with solemnity, Can this doctrine give one moment's ease to the conscience of an unbiased, thinking man? Does it not unsettle all hope, by making the whole religion suspicious and unsure? I am compelled to say, that I see in it no impression of majesty, or wisdom, or love, nothing worthy of a God; and when I compare it with that nobler faith, which directs our eyes and hearts to God's essential mercy, as our only hope, I am amazed that any should ascribe to it superior efficacy, as a religion for sinners, as a means of filling the soul with pious trust and love. I know, indeed, that some will say, that, in giving up an infinite atonement, I deprive myself of all hope of divine favor. To such, I would say, You do wrong to God's mercy. On that mercy I cast myself without a fear. I indeed desire Christ to intercede for me. I regard his relation to me as God's kindest appointment. Through him, 'grace and truth come' to me from Heaven, and I look forward to his friendship, as among the highest blessings of my whole future being. But I cannot, and dare not ask him, to offer an infinite satisfaction for my sins; to appease the wrath of God; to reconcile the Universal Father to his own offspring; to open to me those arms of Divine mercy, which have encircled and borne me from the first moment of my being. The essential and unbounded mercy of my Creator is the foundation of my hope, and a broader and surer the universe cannot give me.

IX. I now proceed to the last consideration, which the limits of this discourse will permit me to urge. It has been more than once suggested, but deserves to be distinctly stated. I observe, then, that Unitarianism promotes piety, because it is a rational religion. By this, I do not mean, that its truths can be fully compreh-

hended; for there is not an object in nature or religion, which has not innumerable connexions and relations beyond our grasp of thought. I mean, that its doctrines are consistent with one another, and with all established truth. Unitarianism is in harmony with the great and clear principles of revelation ; with the laws and powers of human nature ; with the dictates of the moral sense ; with the noblest instincts and highest aspirations of the soul ; and with the lights, which the universe throws on the character of its author. We can hold this doctrine without self-contradiction, without rebelling against our rational and moral powers, without putting to silence the divine monitor in the breast. And this is an unspeakable benefit ; for a religion, thus coincident with reason, conscience, and our whole spiritual being, has the foundations of universal empire in the breast ; and the heart, finding no resistance in the intellect, yields itself wholly, cheerfully, without doubts or misgivings, to the love of its Creator.

To Trinitarianism we object, what has always been objected to it, that it contradicts and degrades reason, and thus exposes the mind to the worst delusions. Some of its advocates, more courageous than prudent, have even recommended ‘the prostration of the understanding’ as preparatory to its reception. Its chief doctrine is an outrage on our rational nature. Its three persons, who constitute its God, must either be frittered away into three unmeaning distinctions, into sounds signifying nothing ; or they are three conscious agents, who cannot, by any human art or metaphysical device, be made to coalesce into one being ; who cannot be really viewed as one mind, having one consciousness and one will. Now a religious system, the cardinal princi-

ple of which offends the understanding, very naturally conforms itself throughout to this prominent feature, and becomes prevalently irrational. He, who is compelled to defend his faith in any particular by the plea, that human reason is so depraved through the fall, as to be an inadequate judge of religion, and that God is honored by our reception of what shocks the intellect, seems to have no defence left against accumulated absurdities. According to these principles, the fanatic, who exclaimed, 'I believe, because it is impossible,' had a fair title to canonization. Reason is too Godlike a faculty, to be insulted with impunity. Accordingly Trinitarianism, as we have seen, links itself with several degrading errors; and its most natural alliance is with Calvinism, that cruel faith, which, stripping God of mercy and man of power, has made Christianity an instrument of torture to the timid, and an object of doubt or scorn to hardier spirits. I repeat it, a doctrine, which violates reason like the Trinity, prepares its advocates, in proportion as it is incorporated into the mind, for worse and worse delusions. It breaks down the distinctions and barriers between truth and falsehood. It creates a diseased taste for prodigies, fictions, and exaggerations, for startling mysteries, and wild dreams of enthusiasm. It destroys the relish for the simple, chaste, serene beauties of truth. Especially when the prostration of understanding is taught ~~as~~ in act of piety, we cannot wonder, that the grossest superstitions should be devoured, and that the credulity of the multitude should keep pace with the forgeries of imposture and fanaticism. The history of the church is the best comment on the effects of divorcing reason from religion; and if the present age is disburdened of many of the

superstitions, under which Christianity and human nature groaned for ages, it owes its relief in no small degree to the reinstating of reason in her long violated rights.

The injury to religion, from irrational doctrines when thoroughly believed, is immense. The human soul has a unity. Its various faculties are adapted to one another. One life pervades it ; and its beauty, strength, and growth, depend on nothing so much, as on the harmony and joint action of all its principles. To wound and degrade it in any of its powers, and especially in the noble and distinguishing power of reason, is to inflict on it universal injury. No notion is more false, than that the heart is to thrive by dwarfing the intellect ; that perplexing doctrines are the best food of piety ; that religion flourishes most luxuriantly in mists and darkness. Reason was given for God as its great object ; and for him it should be kept sacred, invigorated, clarified, protected from human usurpation, and inspired with a meek self-reverence.

The soul never acts so effectually or joyfully, as when all its powers and affections conspire ; as when thought and feeling, reason and sensibility, are called forth together by one great and kindling object. It will never devote itself to God with its whole energy, whilst its guiding faculty sees in him a being to shock and confound it. We want a harmony in our inward nature. We want a piety, which will join light and fervor, and on which the intellectual power will look benignantly. We want religion to be so exhibited, that, in the clearest moments of the intellect, its signatures of truth will grow brighter ; that instead of tottering, it will gather strength and stability from the progress of the human mind. These wants we believe to be met by Unitarianism.

rian Christianity, and therefore we prize it as the best friend of piety.

I have thus stated the chief grounds, on which I rest the claim of Unitarianism to the honor of promoting an enlightened, profound, and happy piety.

Am I now asked, why we prize our system, and why we build churches for its inculcation? If I may be allowed to express myself in the name of conscientious Unitarians, who apply their doctrine to their own hearts and lives, I would reply thus: We prize and would spread our views, because we believe that they reveal God to us in greater glory, and bring us nearer to him, than any other. We are conscious of a deep want, which the creation cannot supply, the want of a Perfect Being, on whom the strength of our love may be centred, and of an Almighty Father, in whom our weaknesses, imperfections, and sorrows may find resource; and such a Being and Father, Unitarian Christianity sets before us. For this we prize it above all price. We can part with every other good. We can endure the darkening of life's fairest prospects. But this bright, consoling doctrine of One God, even the Father, is dearer than life, and we cannot let it go.—Through this faith; everything grows brighter to our view. Born of such a Parent, we esteem our existence an inestimable gift. We meet everywhere our Father, and his presence is as a sun shining on our path. We see him in his works, and hear his praise rising from every spot which we tread. We feel him near in our solitudes, and sometimes enjoy communion with him more tender than human friendship. We see him in our duties, and perform them more gladly, because they are the best tribute we can offer our Heavenly Bene-

factor. Even the consciousness of sin, mournful as it is, does not subvert our peace ; for in the mercy of God, as made manifest in Jesus Christ, we see an inexhaustible fountain of strength, purity, and pardon for all who, in filial reliance, seek these heavenly gifts.—Through this faith, we are conscious of a new benevolence springing up to our fellow creatures, purer and more enlarged than natural affection. Towards all mankind we see a rich and free love flowing from the common Parent, and touched by this love, we are the friends of all. We compassionate the most guilty, and would win them back to God.—Through this faith, we receive the happiness of an ever enlarging hope. There is no good too vast for us to anticipate for the universe or for ourselves, from such a Father as we believe in. We hope from him, what we deem his greatest gift, even the gift of his own Spirit, and the happiness of advancing forever in truth and virtue, in power and love, in union of mind with the Father and the Son.—We are told, indeed, that our faith will not prove an anchor in the last hour. But we have known those, whose departure it has brightened ; and our experience of its power, in trial and peril, has proved it to be equal to all the wants of human nature. We doubt not, that, to its sincere followers, death will be a transition to the calm, pure, joyful mansions prepared by Christ for his disciples. There we expect to meet that great and good Deliverer. With the eye of faith, we already see him looking round him with celestial love on all of every name, who have imbibed his spirit. His spirit; his loyal and entire devotion to the will of his Heavenly Father; his universal, unconquerable benevolence, through which he freely gave from his pierced side his blood, his life for the salvation of the world ; this divine love, and not

creeds, and names, and forms, will then be found to attract his supreme regard. This spirit we trust to see in multitudes of every sect and name ; and we trust, too, that they, who now reproach us, will at that day recognise, in the dreaded Unitarian, this only badge of Christ, and will bid him welcome to the joy of our common Lord.—I have thus stated the views with which we have reared this building. We desire to glorify God, to promote a purer, nobler, happier piety. Even if we err in doctrine, we think, that these motives should shield us from reproach ; should disarm that intolerance, which would exclude us from the church on earth, and from our Father's house in heaven.

We end, as we began, by offering up this building to the Only Living and True God. We have erected it amidst our private habitations, as a remembrancer of our Creator. We have reared it in this busy city, as a retreat for pious meditation and prayer. We dedicate it to the King and Father Eternal, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. We dedicate it to his Unity, to his unrivalled and undivided majesty. We dedicate it to the praise of his free, unbought, unmerited Grace. We dedicate it to Jesus Christ, to the memory of his love, to the celebration of his divine virtue, to the preaching of that truth, which he sealed with blood. We dedicate it to the Holy Spirit, to the sanctifying influence of God, to those celestial emanations of light and strength, which visit and refresh the devout mind. We dedicate it to prayers and praises, which we trust will be continued and perfected in heaven. We dedicate it to social worship, to christian intercourse, to the communion of saints. We dedicate it to the cause of pure morals, of public order, of temperance, uprightness, and general good will. We dedicate it to christian admo-

nition, to those warnings, remonstrances, and earnest and tender persuasions, by which the sinner may be arrested, and brought back to God. We dedicate it to christian consolation, to those truths which assuage sorrow, animate penitence, and lighten the load of human anxiety and fear. We dedicate it to the doctrine of Immortality, to sublime and joyful hopes which reach beyond the grave. In a word, we dedicate it to the great work of perfecting the human soul, and fitting it for nearer approach to its Author. Here may heart meet heart. Here may man meet God. From this place may the song of praise, the ascription of gratitude, the sigh of penitence, the prayer for grace, and the holy resolve, ascend, as fragrant incense, to Heaven; and through many generations may parents bequeath to their children this house, as a sacred spot, where God had 'lifted upon them his countenance,' and given them pledges of his everlasting love.

DISCOURSE

AT THE INSTALLATION OF THE REV. M. I. MOTTE.
BOSTON, 1828.

TIMOTHY II. 17.

FOR GOD HATH NOT GIVEN US THE SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF POWER, AND
OF LOVE, AND OF A SOUND MIND.

WHY was Christianity given? Why did Christ seal it with his blood? Why is it to be preached? What is the great happiness it confers? What is the chief blessing for which it is to be prized? What is its preeminent glory, its first claim on the gratitude of mankind? These are great questions. I wish to answer them plainly, according to the light and ability which God has given me. I read the answer to them in the text. There I learn the great good which God confers through Jesus Christ. 'He hath given us not the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.' The glory of Christianity is, the pure and lofty action which it communicates to the human mind. It does not breathe a timid, abject spirit. If it did, it would deserve no praise. It gives power, energy, courage, constancy to the will; love, disinterestedness, enlarged affection to the heart; soundness, clearness, and vigor to the understanding. It rescues him who receives it from sin, from the sway of the passions; gives him the ~~and~~ and free use of his best powers; brings out

and brightens the divine image in which he was created; and in this way not only bestows the promise, but the beginning of heaven. This is the excellence of Christianity.

This subject I propose to illustrate. Let me begin it with one remark, which I would willingly avoid, but which seems to me to be demanded by the circumstances in which I am placed. I beg you to remember that in this discourse I speak in my own name, and in no other. I am not giving you the opinions of any sect or body of men, but my own. I hold myself alone responsible for what I utter. Let none listen to me for the purpose of learning what others think. I indeed belong to that class of Christians, who are distinguished, by believing that there is one God, even the Father, and that Jesus Christ is not this one God, but his dependent and obedient Son. But my accordance with these is far from being universal, nor have I any desire to extend it. What other men believe is to me of little moment. Their arguments I gratefully hear. Their conclusions I am free to receive or reject. I have no anxiety to wear the livery of any party. I indeed take cheerfully the name of a Unitarian, because unwearied efforts are used to raise against it a popular cry; and I have not so learned Christ, as to shrink from reproaches cast on what I deem his truth. Were the name more honored, I should be glad to throw it off; for I fear the shackles which a party connexion imposes. I wish to regard myself as belonging, not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ, both on earth and in heaven. I desire to escape the narrow walls of a particular church, and to live under the open sky, in the broad light, looking far and wide, seeing with my own eyes, hearing with my own

ears, and following truth meekly, but resolutely, however arduous or solitary be the path in which she leads. I am then no organ of a sect, but speak from myself alone; and I thank God that I live at a time, and under circumstances, which make it my duty to lay open my whole mind with freedom and simplicity.

I began with asking, What is the main design and glory of Christianity? and I repeat the answer, that its design is to give, not a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind. In this its glory chiefly consists. In other words, the influence which it is intended to exert on the human mind, constitutes its supreme honor and happiness. Christ is a great Saviour, as he redeems or sets free the mind, cleansing it from evil, breathing into it the love of virtue, calling forth its noblest faculties and affections, enduing it with moral power, restoring it to order, health and liberty. Such was his great aim. To illustrate these views will be the object of the present discourse.

In reading the New Testament, I everywhere meet the end here ascribed to Jesus Christ. He came, as I am there taught, not to be an outward, but inward deliverer; not to rear an outward throne, but to establish his kingdom within us. He came, according to the express language and plain import of the sacred writers, 'to save us from sin,' 'to bless us by turning us from our iniquities,' 'to redeem us' from corruptions 'handed down by tradition,' to form 'a glorious and spotless church' or community, to 'create us anew after the image of God,' to make us by his 'promises partakers of a divine nature,' and to give us pardon and heaven by calling us to repentance and a growing virtue. In reading the New Testament, I everywhere learn, that Christ lived, taught, died, and rose again, to exert a

purifying and ennobling influence on the human character ; to make us victorious over sin, over ourselves, over peril and pain ; to join us to God by filial love, and above all, by likeness of nature, by participation of his spirit. This is plainly laid down in the New Testament as the supreme end of Christ.

Let me now ask, Can a nobler end be ascribed to Jesus ? I affirm, that there is, and can be no greater work on earth, than to purify the soul from evil, and to kindle in it new light, life, energy, and love. I maintain, that the true measure of the glory of a religion, is to be found in the spirit and power which it communicates to its disciples. This is one of the plain teachings of reason. The chief blessing to an intelligent being, that which makes all other blessings poor, is the improvement of his own mind. Man is glorious and happy, not by what he has, but by what he is. He can receive nothing better or nobler than the unfolding of his own spiritual nature. The highest existence in the universe is Mind ; for God is mind ; and the development of that principle which assimilates us to God, must be our supreme good. The omnipotent Creator, we have reason to think, can bestow nothing greater than intelligence, love, rectitude, energy of will and of benevolent action ; for these are the splendors of his own nature. We adore him for these. In imparting these, he imparts, as it were, himself. We are too apt to look abroad for good. But the only true good is within. In this outward universe, magnificent as it is, in the bright day and the starry night, in the earth and the skies, we can discover nothing so vast as thought, so strong as the unconquerable purpose of duty, so sublime as the spirit of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice. A mind,

which withstands all the powers of the outward universe, all the pains which fire, and sword, and storm can inflict, rather than swerve from uprightness, is nobler than the universe. Why will we not learn the glory of the soul? We are seeking a foreign good. But we all possess within us what is of more worth than the external creation. For this outward system is the product of Mind. All its harmony, beauty, and beneficent influences, are the fruits and manifestations of Thought and Love; and is it not nobler and happier, to be enriched with these energies, from which the universe springs, and to which it owes its magnificence, than to possess the universe itself? It is not what we have, but what we are, which constitutes our glory and felicity. The only true and durable riches belong to the mind. A soul, narrow and debased, may extend its possessions to the ends of the earth, but is poor and wretched still. It is through inward health that we enjoy all outward things. Philosophers teach us, that the mind creates the beauty which it admires in nature; and we all know, that, when abandoned to evil passions, it can blot out this beauty, and spread over the fairest scenes the gloom of a dungeon. We all know, that by vice it can turn the cup of social happiness into poison, and the most prosperous condition of life into a curse. From these views we learn, that the true friend and Saviour, is not he who acts for us abroad, but who acts within, who sets the soul free, touches the springs of thought and affection, binds us to God, and by assimilating us to the Creator, brings us into harmony with the creation. Thus the end which we have ascribed to Christ, the most glorious and beneficent which can be accomplished by any power on earth or

That the highest purpose of Christianity is such as has now been affirmed, might easily be shown from a survey of all its doctrines and precepts. It might be shown, that every office with which Jesus Christ is invested, was intended to give him power over the human character; and that his great distinction consists in the grandeur and beneficence of his influence on the soul. But a discussion of this extent cannot be comprehended in a single discourse. Instead of a general survey of the subject, I shall take one feature of it, a primary and most important one, and shall attempt to show that the great aim of this is to call forth the soul to a higher life, to a nobler exercise of its power and affections.

This leading feature of Christianity, is the knowledge which it gives of the character of God. Jesus Christ came to reveal the Father. In the prophecies concerning him in the Old Testament, no characteristic is so frequently named, as that he should spread the knowledge of the true God. Now I ask, what constitutes the importance of such a revelation? Why has the Creator sent his Son to make himself known? I answer, God is most worthy to be known because he is the most quickening, purifying and ennobling object for the mind; and his great purpose in revealing himself, is, that he may exalt and perfect human nature. God, as he is manifested by Christ, is another name for intellectual and moral excellence; and in the knowledge of him, our intellectual and moral powers find their element, nutriment, strength, expansion and happiness. To know God is to attain to the sublimest conception in the universe. To love God is to bind ourselves to a being, who is fitted, as no other being is, to penetrate and move our whole hearts; in loving whom we exalt ourselves; in loving whom, we love the best, the good,

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the beautiful, and the infinite ; and under whose influence, the soul unfolds itself as a perennial plant under the cherishing sun. This constitutes the chief glory of religion. It ennobles the soul. In this its unrivalled dignity and happiness consist.

I fear that the world at large think religion a very different thing from what has now been set forth. Too many think it a depressing, rather than an elevating service, that it breaks rather than ennobles the spirit, that it teaches us to cower before an almighty and irresistible being ; and I must confess, that religion, as it has been generally taught, is anything but an elevating principle. It has been used to scare the child and appal the adult. Men have been virtually taught to glorify God by flattery, rather than by becoming excellent and glorious themselves, and thus doing honor to their Maker. Our dependence on God has been so taught as to extinguish the consciousness of our free nature and moral power. Religion, in one or another form, has always been an engine for crushing the human soul. But such is not the religion of Christ. If it were, it would deserve no respect. We are not, we cannot be bound to prostrate ourselves before a deity, who makes us abject and base. That moral principle within us, which calls us to watch over and to perfect our own souls, is an inspiration, which no teaching can supersede or abolish. But I cannot bear, even in way of argument, to speak of Christianity as giving views of God depressing and debasing to the human mind. Christ hath revealed to us God as The Father, and as a Father in the noblest sense of that word. He hath revealed him, as the author and lover of all souls, desiring to redeem all from sin, and to impress his likeness more and more resplendent on all ; as proffering to all that best

gift in the universe, his ‘ holy spirit ; ’ as having sent his beloved Son to train us up, and to introduce us to an ‘ inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading in the heavens.’ Such is the God of Jesus Christ ; a being not to break the spirit, but to breathe trust, courage, constancy, magnanimity, in a word, all the sentiments which form an elevated mind.

This sentiment, that the knowledge of God, as given by Christ, is important and glorious, because quickening and exalting to the human soul, needs to be taught plainly and forcibly. The main ground of the obligation of being religious, I fear, is not understood among the multitude of Christians. Ask them, why they must know and worship God, and I fear, that were the heart to speak, the answer would be, because he can do with us what he will, and consequently our first concern is to secure his favor. Religion is a calculation of interest, a means of safety. God is worshipped too often on the same principle, on which flattery and personal attentions are lavished on human superiors, and the worshipper cares not how abjectly he bows, if he may win to his side the power which he cannot resist. I look with deep sorrow on this common perversion of the highest principle of the soul. My friends, God is not to be worshipped, because he has much to give, for on this principle a despot, who should be munificent to his slaves, would merit homage. He is not to be adored for mere power; for power, when joined with selfishness and crime, ought to be withheld, and the greater the might of an evil agent, the holier and the loftier is the spirit which will not bend to him. True religion is the worship of a perfect being, who is the author of perfection to those who adore him. On this ground, and on no other, religion rests.

Why is it, my hearers, that God has discovered such solicitude, if I may use the word, to make himself known and obtain our worship? Think you, that he calls us to adore him from a love of homage or service? Has God man's passion for ruling, man's thirst for applause, man's desire to have his name shouted by crowds? Could the acclamations of the universe, though concentrated into one burst of praise, give our Creator a new or brighter consciousness of his own majesty and goodness? Oh! no. He has manifested himself to us, because, in the knowledge and adoration of his perfections, our own intellectual and moral perfection is found. What he desires, is, not our subjection, but our excellence. He has no love of praise. He calls us as truly to honor goodness in others as in himself, and only claims supreme honor, because he transcends all others, and because he communicates to the mind which receives him, a light, strength, purity, which no other being can confer. God has no love of empire. It could give him no pleasure to have his footstool worn by the knees of infinite hosts. It is to make us his children in the highest sense of that word, to make us more and more the partakers of his own nature, not to multiply slaves, that he hath sent his Son to make himself known. God indeed is said to seek his own glory; but the glory of a creator must consist in the glory of his works; and we may be assured, that he cannot wish any recognition of himself, but that which will perfect his noblest, highest work, the immortal mind.

Do not, my friends, forget the great end for which Christ enjoins on us the worship of God. It is not, that we may ingratiate ourselves with an almighty agent, whose frown is destruction. It is, that we may

hold communion with an intelligence and goodness, infinitely surpassing our own ; that we may rise above imperfect and finite natures ; that we may attach ourselves by love and reverence to the best Being in the universe ; and that through veneration and love we may receive into our own minds the excellence, disinterestedness, wisdom, purity, and power, which we adore. This reception of the divine attributes, I desire especially to hold forth, as the most glorious end for which God reveals himself. To praise him is not enough. That homage, which has no power to assimilate us to him, is of little or no worth. The truest admiration is that by which we receive other minds into our own. True praise is a sympathy with excellence, gaining strength by utterance. Such is the praise which God demands. Then only is the purpose of Christ's revelation of God accomplished, when, by reception of the doctrine of a Paternal Divinity, we are quickened to 'follow him, as dear children,' and are 'filled with his fulness,' and become 'his temples,' and 'dwell in God, and have God dwelling in ourselves.'

I have endeavoured to show the great purpose of the christian doctrine respecting God, or in what its importance and glory consist. Had I time, I might show, that every other doctrine of our religion has the same end. I might particularly show how wonderfully fitted are the character, example, life, death, resurrection, and all the offices of Christ, to cleanse the mind from moral evil, to quicken, soften, elevate, and transform it into the divine image ; and I might show that these are the influences which true faith derives from him, and through which he works out our salvation. But I cannot enter on this fruitful subject. Let me only say, that I see

everywhere in Christianity, this great design of liberating and raising the human mind, on which I have enlarged. I see in Christianity nothing narrowing or depressing, nothing of the littleness of the systems which human fear, and craft, and ambition, have engendered. I meet there no minute legislation, no descending to precise details, no arbitrary injunctions, no yoke of ceremonies, no outward religion. Everything breathes freedom, liberality, enlargement. I meet there, not a formal, rigid creed, binding on the intellect, through all ages, the mechanical, passive repetition of the same words, and the same ideas; but I meet a few grand, all comprehending truths, which are given to the soul, to be developed and applied by itself; given to it, as seed to the sower, to be cherished and expanded by its own thought, love, and obedience into more and more glorious fruits of wisdom and virtue. I see it everywhere inculcating an enlarged spirit of piety and philanthropy, leaving each of us to manifest this spirit according to the monitions of his individual conscience. I hear it everywhere calling the soul to freedom and power, by calling it to guard against the senses, the passions, the appetites, through which it is chained, enfeebled, destroyed. I see it everywhere aiming to give the mind power over the outward world, to make it superior to events, to suffering, to material nature, to persecution, to death. I see it everywhere aiming to give the mind power over itself, to invest it with inward sovereignty, to call forth within us a mighty energy for our own elevation. I meet in Christianity only discoveries of a vast, bold, illimitable character; fitted and designed to give energy and expansion to the soul. By its doctrine of a Universal Father, it sweeps away all the barriers of sect, party, rank, and nation, in which men have

labored to shut up their love, makes us members of an unbounded family ; and establishes sympathies between man and the whole intelligent creation. In the character of Christ, it sets before us moral perfection, that greatest and most quickening miracle in human history, a purity, which shows no stain or touch of the earth, an excellence unborrowed, unconfined, bearing no impress of any age or any nation, the very image of the Universal Father ; and it encourages us, by assurances of God's merciful aid, to propose this enlarged, unsullied virtue, as the model and happiness of our moral nature. By the cross of Christ, it sets forth the spirit of self-sacrifice with an energy never known before, and, in thus crucifying selfishness, frees the mind from its worst chain. By Christ's resurrection, it links this short life with eternity, discovers to us in the fleeting present, the germ of an endless future, reveals to us the human mind ascending to other worlds, breathing a freer air, forming higher connexions, and summons us to a force of holy purpose becoming such a destination. To conclude, Christianity everywhere sets before us God in the character of infinitely free, rich, boundless Grace, in a clemency which is 'not overcome by evil,' but overcomes evil with good ;' and a more animating and ennobling truth, who of us can conceive ? I have hardly glanced at what Christianity contains. But who does not see that it was sent from heaven, to call forth, and exalt human nature, and that this is its great glory ?

It has been my object in this discourse to lay open a great truth, a central, all-comprehending truth of Christianity. Whoever intelligently and cordially embraces it, obtains a standard by which to try all other doctrines, and to measure the importance of all other

truths. Is it so embraced? I fear not. I apprehend that it is dimly discerned by many who acknowledge it, whilst on many more it has hardly dawned. I see other views prevailing, and prevailing in a greater or less degree among all bodies of Christians, and they seem to me among the worst errors of our times. Some of these I would now briefly notice.

1. There are those, who, instead of placing the glory of Christianity in the pure and powerful action which it gives to the human mind, seem to think, that it is rather designed to substitute the activity of another for our own. They imagine the benefit of the religion to be, that it enlists on our side an almighty being who does everything for us. To disparage human agency, seems to them the essence of piety. They think Christ's glory to consist, not in quickening free agents to act powerfully on themselves, but in changing them by an irresistible energy. They place a Christian's happiness, not so much in powers and affections unfolded in his own breast, as in a foreign care extended over him, in a foreign wisdom which takes the place of his own intelligence. Now the great purpose of Christianity is, not to procure or offer to the mind a friend on whom it may passively lean, but to make the mind itself wise, strong, and efficient. Its end is, not that wisdom and strength, as subsisting in another, should do everything for us, but that these attributes should grow perpetually in our own souls. According to Christianity, we are not carried forward as a weight by a foreign agency; but God, by means suited to our moral nature, quickens and strengthens us to walk ourselves. The great design of Christianity is to build up in our own souls a power to withstand, to endure, to triumph. Inward vigor is its aim. That we should do

most for ourselves and most for others, this is the glory it confers, and in this its happiness is found.

2. I pass to another illustration of the insensibility of men to the great doctrine, that the happiness and glory of Christianity consist in the healthy and lofty frame to which it raises the mind. I refer to the propensity of multitudes to make a wide separation between religion or christian virtue, and its rewards. That the chief reward lies in the very spirit of religion, they do not dream. They think of being Christians for the sake of something beyond the christian character, and something more precious. They think that Christ has a greater good to give, than a strong and generous love towards God and mankind; and would almost turn from him with scorn, if they thought him only a benefactor to the mind. It is this low view, which dwarfs the piety of thousands. Multitudes are serving God for wages distinct from the service, and hence superstition, slavishness, and formality are substituted for inward energy and spiritual worship.

3. Men's ignorance of the great truth stated in this discourse, is seen in the low ideas attached by multitudes to the word, salvation. Ask multitudes, what is the chief evil from which Christ came to save them, and they will tell you, 'From hell, from penal fires, from future punishment.' Accordingly they think, that salvation is something which another may achieve for them, very much as a neighbour may quench a conflagration that menaces their dwellings and lives. That word hell, which is used so seldom in the sacred pages, which, in a faithful translation, would not once occur in the writings of Paul, and Peter, and John, which we meet only in four or five discourses of Jesus, and which all persons, acquainted with Jewish geography, know to

be a metaphor, a figure of speech, and not a literal expression. This word, by a perverse and exaggerated use, has done unspeakable injury to Christianity. It has possessed and diseased men's imaginations with outward tortures, shrieks, and flames; given them the idea of an outward ruin as what they have chiefly to dread; turned their thoughts to Jesus, as an outward deliverer; and thus blinded them to his true glory, which consists in his setting free and exalting the soul. Men are flying from an outward hell, when in truth they carry within them the hell which they should chiefly dread. The salvation which man chiefly needs, and that which brings with it all other deliverance, is salvation from the evil of his own mind. There is something far worse than outward punishment. It is sin; it is the state of a soul, which has revolted from God, and cast off its allegiance to conscience and the divine word; which renounces its Father, and hardens itself against Infinite Love; which, endued with divine powers, entrals itself to animal lusts; which makes gain its god; which has capacities of boundless and ever growing love, and shuts itself up in the dungeon of private interests; which, gifted with a self-directing power, consents to be a slave, and is passively formed by custom, opinion, and changing events; which, living under God's eye, dreads man's frown or scorn, and prefers human praise to its own calm consciousness of virtue; which tamely yields to temptation, shrinks with a coward's baseness from the perils of duty, and sacrifices its glory and peace in parting with self-control. No ruin can be compared to this. This the impenitent man carries with him beyond the grave, and there meets its natural issue, and inevitable retribution, in remorse, self-torture, and woes unknown on earth. This we cannot too strongly fear.

To save, in the highest sense of that word, is to lift the fallen spirit from this depth, to heal the diseased mind, to restore it to energy and freedom of thought, conscience, and love. This was chiefly the salvation for which Christ shed his blood. For this the holy spirit is given ; and to this all the truths of Christianity conspire.

4. Another illustration of the error which I am laboring to expose, and which places the glory and importance of Christianity in something besides its quickening influence on the soul, is afforded in the common apprehensions formed of heaven, and of the methods by which it may be obtained. Not a few, I suspect, conceive of heaven as a foreign good. It is a distant country, to which we are to be conveyed by an outward agency. How slowly do men learn, that heaven is the perfection of the mind, and that Christ gives it now just as far as he raises the mind to celestial truth and virtue. It is true, that this word is often used to express a future felicity ; but the blessedness of the future world is only a continuance of what is begun here. There is but one true happiness, that of a mind unfolding its best powers, and attaching itself to great objects ; and Christ gives heaven, only in proportion as he gives this elevation of character. The disinterestedness, and moral strength, and filial piety of the Christian, are not mere means of heaven, but heaven itself, and heaven now.

The most exalted idea we can form of the future state, is, that it brings and joins us to God. But is not approach to this great being begun on earth ? Another delightful view of heaven, is, that it unites us with the good at great of our own rate, and even with higher orders of beings. But this union is one of spirit, not of mere place : it is accordance of thought and feeling.

"not on outward relation; and does not this harmony
 begin now? and is not virtuous friendship on
 earth essentially the pleasure which we hope hereafter?"
 What place would be drearier than the future mansions
 of Christ to one who should want sympathy with their
 inhabitants, who could not understand their language,
 who would feel himself a foreigner there, who would
 be taught by the joys which he could not partake, his
 own loneliness and desolation? These views, I know,
 are often given with greater or less distinctness; but
 they seem to me not to have brought home to men the
 truth, that the fountain of happiness must be in our own
 souls. Gross ideas of futurity still prevail. I should
 not be surprised if to some among us the chief idea of
 heaven were that of a splendor, a radiance, like that
 which Christ wore on the Mount of Transfiguration.
 Let us all consider, and it is a great truth, that heaven
 has no lustre surpassing that of intellectual and moral
 worth; and that, were the effulgence of the sun and
 stars concentrated in the Christian, even this would be
 darkness, compared with the pure beamings of wisdom,
 love and power from his mind. Think not then that
 Christ has come to give heaven as something distinct
 from virtue. Heaven is the freed and sanctified mind,
 enjoying God through accordance with his attributes,
 multiplying its bonds and sympathies with excellent
 beings, putting forth noble powers, and ministering, in
 union with the enlightened and holy, to the happiness
 and virtue of the universe.

My friends, I fear I have been guilty of repetition.
 But I feel the greatness of the truth which I deliver,
 and I am anxious to make it plain. Men need to be
 taught it perpetually. They have always been inclined
 to look to Christ for something better, as they have

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dreamed, than the elevation of their own souls. The great purpose of Christianity to unfold and strengthen and lift up the mind, has been perpetually thrown out of sight. In truth, this purpose has been more than overlooked. It has been reversed. The very religion, given to exalt human nature, has been used to make it abject. The very religion, which was given to create a generous hope, has been made an instrument of servile and torturing fear. The very religion, which came from God's goodness to enlarge the human soul with a kindred goodness, has been employed to narrow it to a sect, to rear the Inquisition, and to kindle fires for the martyr. The very religion, given to make the understanding and conscience free, has, by a criminal perversion, served to break them into subjection to priests, ministers, and human creeds. Ambition and craft have seized on the solemn doctrines of an omnipotent God and of future punishment, and turned them into engines against the child, the trembling female, the ignorant adult, until the skeptic has been emboldened to charge on religion the chief miseries and degradation of human nature. It is from a deep and sorrowful conviction of the injuries inflicted on Christianity and on the human soul, by these perversions and errors, that I have reiterated the great truth of this discourse. I would rescue our holy faith from this dishonor. Christianity has no tendency to break the human spirit, or to make man a slave. It has another aim; and as far as it is understood, it puts forth another power. God sent it from heaven, Christ sealed it with his blood, that it might give force of thought and purpose to the human mind, might free it from all fear but the fear of wrong doing, might make it free of its fellow beings, might break from it every outward and inward chain.

My hearers, I close with exhorting you to remember the great purpose of our religion. Receive Christianity as given to raise you in the scale of spiritual being. Expect from it no good, any farther than it gives strength and worth to your characters. Think not, as some seem to think, that Christ has a higher gift than purity to bestow, even pardon to the sinner. He does bring pardon. But once separate the idea of pardon from purity; once imagine that forgiveness is possible to him who does not forsake sin; once make it an exemption from outward punishment, and not the admission of the reformed mind to favor and communion with God; and the doctrine of pardon becomes your peril, and a system, so teaching it, is fraught with evil. Expect no good from Christ, any farther than you are exalted by his character and teaching. Expect nothing from his cross, unless a power comes from it, strengthening you to 'bear his cross,' to 'drink his cup,' with his own unconquerable love. This is its highest influence. Look not abroad for the blessings of Christ. His reign and chief blessings are within you. The human soul is his kingdom. There he gains his victories, there rears his temples, there lavishes his treasures. His noblest monument is a mind, redeemed from iniquity, brought back and devoted to God, forming itself after the perfection of the Saviour, great through its power to suffer for truth, lovely through its meek and gentle virtues. No other monument does Christ desire; for this will endure and increase in splendor, when earthly thrones shall have fallen, and even when the present order of the outward universe shall have accomplished its work, and shall have passed away.

DISCOURSE

AT THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. F. A. FARLEY,
PROVIDENCE, R. I. 1828.

EPHESIANS, V. 1.

BE YE THEREFORE FOLLOWERS OF GOD, AS DEAR CHILDREN.

To promote true religion is the purpose of the christian ministry. For this it was ordained. On the present occasion, therefore, when a new teacher is to be given to the church, a discourse on the character of true religion will not be inappropriate. I do not mean, that I shall attempt, in the limits to which I am now confined, to set before you all its properties, signs, and operations ; for in so doing I should burden your memories with divisions and vague generalities, as uninteresting as they would be unprofitable. My purpose is, to select one view of the subject, which seems to me of primary dignity and importance ; and I select this, because it is greatly neglected, and because I attribute to this neglect much of the inefficacy, and many of the corruptions of religion.

The text calls us to follow or imitate God, to seek accordance with or likeness to him ; and to do this, not fearfully and faintly, but with the spirit and hope of beloved children. The doctrine, which I propose to illustrate, is derived immediately from these words, and

is incorporated with the whole New Testament. I affirm, and would maintain, that true religion consists in proposing as our great end, a growing likeness to the Supreme Being. Its noblest influence consists in making us more and more partakers of the Divinity. For this it is to be preached. Religious instruction should aim chiefly to turn men's aspirations and efforts to that perfection of the soul, which constitutes ~~it~~ a bright image of God. Such is the topic now to be discussed ; and I implore Him, whose glory I seek to aid me in unfolding and enforcing it with simplicity and clearness, with a calm and pure zeal, and with unfeigned charity.

I begin with observing, what all indeed will understand, that the likeness to God, of which I propose to speak, belongs to man's higher or spiritual nature. It has its foundation in the original and essential capacities of the mind. In proportion as these are unfolded by right and vigorous exertion, it is extended and brightened. In proportion as these lie dormant, it is obscured. In proportion as they are perverted and overpowered by the appetites and passions, it is blotted out. In truth moral evil, if unresisted and habitual, may so blight and lay waste these capacities, that the image of God in man may seem to be wholly destroyed.

The importance of this assimilation to our Creator, is a topic, which needs no labored discussion. All men, of whatever name, or sect, or opinion, will meet me on this ground. All, I presume, will allow, that no good in the compass of the universe, or within the gift of omnipotence, can be compared to a resemblance of God, or to a participation of his attributes. I fear no contradiction here. Likeness to God is the supreme gift. He ~~can~~ communicate nothing so precious, glorious,

blessed as himself. To hold intellectual and moral affinity with the Supreme Being, to partake his spirit, to be his children by derivations of kindred excellence, to bear a growing conformity to the perfection which we adore; this is a felicity which obscures and annihilates all other good.

It is only in proportion to this likeness that we can enjoy either God, or the universe. That God can be known and enjoyed only through sympathy or kindred attributes, is a doctrine which even Gentile philosophy discerned. That the pure in heart can alone see and commune with the pure Divinity, was the sublime instruction of ancient sages as well as of inspired prophets. It is indeed the lesson of daily experience. To understand a great and good being, we must have the seeds of the same excellence. How quickly, by what an instinct, do accordant minds recognise one another! No attraction is so powerful as that which subsists between the truly wise, and good; whilst the brightest excellence is lost on those, who have nothing congenial in their own breasts. God becomes a real being to us, in proportion as his own nature is unfolded within us.

To a man who is growing in the likeness of God, faith begins even here to change into vision. He carries within himself a proof of a Deity, which can only be understood by experience. He more than believes, he feels the divine presence; and gradually rises to an intercourse with his Maker, to which it is not irreverent to apply the name of friendship and intimacy. The apostle John intended to express this truth, when he tells us that he, in whom a principle of divine charity or benevolence has become a habit and life, 'dwells in God and God in him.'

It is plain, too, that likeness to God is the true and only preparation for the enjoyment of the universe. In proportion as we approach and resemble the mind of God, we are brought into harmony with the creation; for, in that proportion we possess the principles from which the universe sprung; we carry within ourselves the perfections of which, its beauty, magnificence, order, benevolent adaptations, and boundless purposes, are the results and manifestations. God unfolds himself in his works to a kindred mind. It is possible, that the brevity of these hints may expose to the charge of mysticism, what seems to me the calmest and clearest truth. I think, however, that every reflecting man will feel, that likeness to God must be a principle of sympathy or accordance with his creation; for the creation is a birth and shining forth of the Divine Mind, a work through which his spirit breathes. In proportion as we receive this spirit, we possess within ourselves the explanation of what we see. We discern more and more of God in everything, from the frail flower to the everlasting stars. Even in evil, that dark cloud which hangs over the creation, we discern rays of light and hope, and gradually come to see in suffering and temptation, proofs and instruments of the sublimest purposes of Wisdom and Love.

I have offered these very imperfect views, that I may show the great importance of the doctrine which I am solicitous to enforce. I would teach, that likeness to God is a good so unutterably surpassing all other good, that whoever admits it as attainable, must acknowledge it to be the chief aim of life. I would show that the highest and happiest office of religion, is to bring the mind into growing accordance with God, and that by

the tendency of religious systems to this end their truth and worth are to be chiefly tried.

I am aware that it may be said, that the scriptures, in speaking of man as made in the image of God, and in calling us to imitate him, use bold and figurative language. It may be said, that there is danger from too literal an interpretation ; that God is an unapproachable being ; that I am not warranted in ascribing to man a like nature to the Divine ; that we and all things illustrate the Creator by contrast, not by resemblance ; that religion manifests itself chiefly in convictions and acknowledgements of utter worthlessness ; and that to talk of the greatness and divinity of the human soul, is to inflate that pride through which Satan fell, and through which man involves himself in that fallen spirit's ruin.

I answer, that, to me, scripture and reason hold a different language. In Christianity particularly, I meet perpetual testimonies to the divinity of human nature. This whole religion expresses an infinite concern of God for the human soul, and teaches that he deems no methods too expensive for its recovery and exaltation. Christianity, with one voice, calls me to turn my regards and care to the spirit within me, as of more worth than the whole outward world. It calls us to ‘be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect ;’ and everywhere, in the sublimity of its precepts, it implies and recognises the sublime capacities of the being to whom they are addressed. It assures us that human virtue is ‘in the sight of God of great price,’ and speaks of the return of a human being to virtue as an event which increases the joy of heaven. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the brightness of his glory, the express and unsullied image of the Divinity, is seen mingling with

men as a friend and brother, offering himself as their example, and promising to his true followers a share in all his splendors and joys. In the New Testament, God is said to communicate his own spirit, and all his fulness to the human soul. In the New Testament man is exhorted to aspire after "honors, glory, and immortality;" and Heaven, a word expressing the nearest approach to God, and a divine happiness, is everywhere proposed as the end of his being. In truth, the very essence of christian faith is, that we trust in God's mercy, as revealed in Jesus Christ, for a state of celestial purity, in which we shall grow forever in the likeness, and knowledge, and enjoyment of the infinite Father. Lofty views of the nature of man are bound up and interwoven with the whole christian system. Say not, that these are at war with humility; for who was ever humbler than Jesus, and yet who ever possessed such a consciousness of greatness and divinity? Say not that man's business is to think of his sin, and not of his dignity; for great sin implies a great capacity; it is the abuse of a noble nature; and no man can be deeply and rationally contrite, but he who feels, that in wrong doing he has resisted a divine voice, and warped against a divine principle, in his own soul.—I need not, I trust, pursue the argument from revelation. There is an argument from nature and reason, which seems to me so convincing, and is at the same time so fitted to explain what I mean by man's possession of a like nature to God, that I shall pass at once to its exposition.

That man has a kindred nature with God, and may bear most important and ennobling relations to him, seems to me to be established by a striking proof. This proof you will understand, by considering, for a moment, how we obtain our ideas of God. Whence come the

conceptions, which we include under that august name ? Whence do we derive our knowledge of the attributes and perfections, which constitute the Supreme Being ? I answer, we derive them from our own souls. The divine attributes are first developed in ourselves, and thence transferred to our Creator. The idea of God, sublime and awful as it is, is the idea of our own spiritual nature, purified and enlarged to infinity. In ourselves are the elements of the Divinity. God then does not sustain a figurative resemblance to man. It is the resemblance of a parent to a child, the likeness of a kindred nature.

We call God a Mind. He has revealed himself as a spirit. But what do we know of mind, but through the unfolding of this principle in our own breasts ? That unbounded spiritual energy which we call God, is conceived by us only through consciousness, through the knowledge of ourselves.—We ascribe thought or intelligence to the Deity as one of his most glorious attributes. And what means this language ? These terms we have framed to express operations or faculties of our own souls. The Infinite Light would be forever hidden from us, did not kindred rays dawn and brighten within us. God is another name for human intelligence, raised above all error and imperfection, and extended, to all possible truth.

The same is true of God's goodness. How do we understand this but by the principle of love implanted in the human breast ? Whence is it, that this divine attribute is so faintly comprehended, but from the feeble development of it in the multitude of men ? Who can understand the strength, purity, fulness, and extent of divine philanthropy, but he in whom selfishness has been swallowed up in love ?

The same is true of all the moral perfections of the Deity. These are comprehended by us, only through our own moral nature. It is conscience within us, which, by its approving and condemning voice, interprets to us God's love of virtue and hatred of sin; and without conscience, these glorious conceptions would never have opened on the mind. It is the lawgiver in our own breasts, which gives us the idea of divine authority, and binds us to obey it. The soul, by its sense of right, or its perception of moral distinctions, is clothed with sovereignty over itself, and through this alone, it understands and recognises the Sovereign of the Universe. Men, as by a natural inspiration, have agreed to speak of conscience as the voice of God, as the Divinity within us. This principle, reverently obeyed, makes us more and more partakers of the moral perfection of the Supreme Being, of that very excellence, which constitutes the rightfulness of his sceptre, and enthrones him over the universe. Without this inward law, we should be as incapable of receiving a law from Heaven, as the brute. Without this, the thunders of Sinai might startle the outward ear, but would have no meaning, no authority to the mind. I have expressed here a great truth. Nothing teaches so encouragingly our relation and resemblance to God; for the glory of the Supreme Being, is eminently moral. We blind ourselves to his chief splendor, if we think only or mainly of his power, and overlook those attributes of rectitude and goodness, to which he subjects his omnipotence, and which are the foundations and very substance of his universal and immutable Law. And are these attributes revealed to us through the principles and convictions of our own souls? Do we understand through sympathy God's perception of the right, the good, the

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holy, the just? Then with what propriety is it said, that in his own image he made man!

I am aware, that it may be objected to these views, that we receive our idea of God from the universe, from his works, and not so exclusively from our own souls. The universe, I know, is full of God. The heavens and earth declare his glory. In other words, the effects and signs of power, wisdom, and goodness, are apparent through the whole creation. But apparent to what? Not to the outward eye; not to the acutest organs of sense; but to a kindred mind, which interprets the universe by itself. It is only through that energy of thought, by which we adapt various and complicated means to distant ends, and give harmony and a common bearing to multiplied exertions, that we understand the creative intelligence which has established the order, dependencies and harmony of nature. We see God around us, because he dwells within us. It is by a kindred wisdom, that we discern his wisdom in his works. The brute, with an eye as piercing as ours, looks on the universe; and the page, which to us is radiant with characters of greatness and goodness, is to him a blank. In truth, the beauty and glory of God's works are revealed to the mind by a light beaming from itself. We discern the impress of God's attributes in the universe by accordance of nature, and enjoy them through sympathy.—I hardly need observe, that these remarks in relation to the universe apply with equal, if not greater force, to revelation.

I shall now be met by another objection which to many may seem strong. It will be said, that these various attributes of which I have spoken, exist in God in Infinite Perfection, and that this destroys all affinity between the human and the divine mind. To this

I have two replies. In the first place, an attribute, by becoming perfect, does not part with its essence. Love, wisdom, power, and purity, do not change their nature by enlargement. If they did, we should lose the Supreme Being through his very infinity. Our ideas of him would fade away into mere sounds. For example, if wisdom in God, because unbounded, have no affinity with that attribute in man, why apply to him that term? It must signify nothing. Let me ask what we mean, when we say that we discern the marks of intelligence in the universe? We mean, that we meet there the proofs of a mind like our own. We certainly discern proofs of no other; so that to deny this doctrine, would be to deny the evidences of a God, and utterly to subvert the foundations of religious belief. What man can examine the structure of a plant or an animal, and see the adaptation of its parts to each other and to common ends, and not feel, that it is the work of an intelligence akin to his own, and that he traces these marks of design by the same spiritual energy in which they had their origin?

But I would offer another answer to this objection, that God's infinity places him beyond the resemblance and approach of man. I affirm, and I trust that I do not speak too strongly, that there are traces of infinity in the human mind, and that in this very respect, it bears a likeness to God. The very conception of infinity is the mark of a nature, to which no limit can be prescribed. This thought indeed comes to us not so much from abroad as from our own souls. We ascribe this attribute to God, because we possess capacities and wants, which only an unbounded being can fill, and because we are conscious of a tendency in spiritual faculties to unlimited expansion. We believe in the divine

infinity through something congenial with it in our own breasts. I hope I speak clearly, and if not, I would ask those to whom I am obscure, to pause before they condemn. To me it seems, that the soul, in all its higher actions, in original thought, in the creations of genius, in the soarings of imagination, in its love of beauty and grandeur, in its aspirations after a pure and unknown joy, and especially in disinterestedness, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, and in enlightened devotion, has a character of infinity. There is often a depth in human love which may be strictly called unfathomable. There is sometimes a losty strength in moral principle, which all the power of the outward universe cannot overcome. There seems a might within which can more than balance all might without. There is, too, a piety, which swells into a transport too vast for utterance, and into an immeasurable joy. I am speaking indeed of what is uncommon, but still of realities. We see however the tendency of the soul to the infinite in more familiar and ordinary forms. Take for example the delight which we find in the vast scenes of nature, in prospects which spread around us without limits, in the immensity of the heavens and the ocean, and especially in the rush and roar of mighty winds, waves, and torrents, when, amidst our deep awe, a power within seems to respond to the omnipotence around us. The same principle is seen in the delight ministered to us by works of fiction or of imaginative art, in which our own nature is set before us in more than human beauty and power. In truth the soul is always bursting its limits. It thirsts continually for wider knowledge. It rushes forward to untried happiness. It has deep wants which nothing limited can appease. Its true element and end is an unbounded good. Thus God's infinity

has its image in the soul, and through the soul much more than through the universe, we arrive at this conception of the Deity.

In these remarks I have spoken strongly. But I have no fear of expressing too strongly the connexion between the divine and the human mind. My only fear is, that I shall dishonor the great subject. The danger to which we are most exposed, is that of severing the Creator from his creatures. The propensity of human sovereigns to cut off communication between themselves and their subjects, and to disclaim a common nature with their inferiors, has led the multitude of men, who think of God chiefly under the character of a king, to conceive of him as a being, who places his glory in multiplying distinctions between himself and all other beings. The truth is, that the union between the Creator and the creature surpasses all other bonds in strength and intimacy. He penetrates all things and delights to irradiate all with his glory. Nature, in its lowest and inanimate forms, is pervaded by his power; and when quickened by the mysterious property of life, how wonderfully does it show forth the perfections of its Author! How much of God may be seen in the structure of a single leaf, which, though so frail as to tremble in every wind, yet holds connexions and living communications with the earth, the air, the clouds, and the distant sun; and, through these sympathies with the universe, is itself a revelation of an omnipotent mind. God delights to diffuse himself everywhere. Through his energy, unconscious matter clothes itself with proportions, powers, and beauties which reflect his wisdom and love. How much more must he delight to frame conscious and happy recipients of his perfections, in whom his wisdom and love may substantially dwell,

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with whom he may form spiritual ties, and to whom he may be an everlasting spring of moral energy and happiness. How far the Supreme Being may communicate his attributes to his intelligent offspring, I stop not to inquire. But that his almighty goodness will impart to them powers and glories, of which the material universe is but a faint emblem; I cannot doubt. That the soul, if true to itself and its Maker, will be filled with God, and will manifest him, more than that sun, I cannot doubt. Who can doubt it, that believes and understands the doctrine of human immortality?

The views which I have given in this discourse respecting man's participation of the divine nature, seem to me to receive strong confirmation, from the title or relation most frequently applied to God in the New Testament ; and I have reserved this as the last corroboration of this doctrine, because to my own mind it is singularly affecting. In the New Testament God is made known to us as a Father, and a brighter feature of that book cannot be named. Our worship is to be directed to him as our Father. Our whole religion is to take its character from this view of the Divinity. In this he is to rise always to our minds. And what is it to be a Father? It is to communicate one's own nature, to give life to kindred beings ; and the highest function of a Father is to educate the mind of the child, and to impart to it what is noblest and happiest in his own mind. God is our Father, not merely because he created us, or because he gives us enjoyment ; for he created the flower and the insect, yet we call him not their Father. This bond is a spiritual one. This name belongs to God, because he frames spirits like himself, and delights to give them what is most glorious and blessed in his own nature. Accordingly Christianity is

said with special propriety, to reveal God as the Father, because it reveals him as sending his Son, to cleanse the mind from every stain, and to replenish it forever with the spirit and moral attributes of its Author. Separate from God this idea of his creating and training up beings after his own likeness, and you rob him of the paternal character. This relation vanishes, and with it, vanish the glory of the gospel, and the dearest hopes of the human soul.

The great use which I would make of the principles laid down in this discourse, is to derive from them just and clear views of the nature of religion. What then is religion? I answer; it is not the adoration of a God, with whom we have no common properties; of a distinct, foreign, separate being; but of an all-communicating Parent. It recognises and adores God as a being, whom we know through our own souls, who has made man in his own image, who is the perfection of our own spiritual nature, who has sympathies with us as kindred beings, who is near us, not in place only like this all surrounding atmosphere, but by spiritual influence and love, who looks on us with parental interest, and whose great design it is to communicate to us forever, and in freer and fuller streams, his own power, goodness, and joy. The conviction of this near and ennobling relation of God to the soul, and of his great purposes towards it, belongs to the very essence of true religion; and true religion manifests itself chiefly and most conspicuously in desires, hopes, and efforts corresponding to this truth. It desires and seeks supremely the assimilation of the mind to God, or the perpetual unfolding and enlargement of those powers and virtues by which it is constituted his glorious image. The

mind, in proportion as it is enlightened and penetrated by true religion, thirsts and labors for a godlike elevation. What else indeed can it seek, if this good be placed within its reach? If I am capable of receiving and reflecting the intellectual and moral glory of my Creator, what else in comparison shall I desire? Shall I deem a property in the outward universe as the highest good, when I may become partaker of the very mind from which it springs, of the prompting love, the disposing wisdom, the quickening power, through which its order, beauty, and beneficent influences subsist? True religion is known by these high aspirations, hopes, and efforts. And this is the religion which most truly honors God. To honor him, is not to tremble before him as an unapproachable sovereign, nor to utter barren praise which leaves us as it found us. It is to become what we praise. It is to approach God as an inexhaustible Fountain of light, power, and purity. It is to feel the quickening and transforming energy of his perfections. It is to thirst for the growth and invigoration of the divine principle within us. It is to seek the very spirit of God. It is to trust in, to bless, to thank him for that rich grace, mercy, love, which was revealed and promulgated by Jesus Christ, and which proposes as its great end the perfection of the human soul.

I regard this view of religion as infinitely important. It does more than all things to make our connexion with our Creator ennobling and happy; and in proportion as we want it, there is danger that the thought of God may itself become the instrument of our degradation. That religion has been so dispensed as to depress the human mind, I need not tell you; and it is a truth, which ought to be known, that the greatness of the Deity, when separated in our thoughts from his parental character,

especially tends to crush human energy and hope. To a frail dependent creature, an omnipotent Creator easily becomes a terror, and his worship easily degenerates into servility, flattery, self-contempt, and selfish calculation. Religion only ennobles us, in as far as it reveals to us the tender and intimate connexion of God with his creatures, and teaches us to see in the very greatness which might give alarm, the source of great and glorious communications to the human soul. You cannot, my hearers, think too highly of the majesty of God. But let not this majesty sever him from you. Remember, that his greatness is the infinity of attributes which yourselves possess. Adore his infinite wisdom; but remember that this wisdom rejoices to diffuse itself, and let an exhilarating hope spring up, at the thought of the immeasurable intelligence which such a Father must communicate to his children. In like manner adore his power. Let the boundless creation fill you with awe and admiration of the energy which sustains it. But remember that God has a nobler work than the outward creation, even the spirit within yourselves; and that it is his purpose to replenish this with his own energy, and to crown it with growing power and triumphs over the material universe. Above all, adore his unutterable goodness. But remember, that this attribute is particularly proposed to you as your model; that God calls you, both by nature and revelation, to a fellowship in his philanthropy; that he has placed you in social relations for the very end of rendering you ministers and representatives of his benevolence; that he even summons you to espouse and to advance the sublimest purpose of his goodness, the redemption of the human race, by extending the knowledge and power of christian truth. It is through such views, that religion

raises up the soul, and binds man by ennobling bonds to his Maker.

To complete my views of this topic, I beg to add an important caution. I have said that the great work of religion is to conform ourselves to God, or to unfold the divine likeness within us. Let none infer from this language, that I place religion in unnatural effort, in straining after excitements which do not belong to the present state, or in anything separate from the clear and simple duties of life. I exhort you to no extravagance. I reverence human nature too much to do it violence. I see too much divinity in its ordinary operations, to urge on it a forced and vehement virtue. To grow in the likeness of God, we need not cease to be men. This likeness does not consist in extraordinary or miraculous gifts, in supernatural additions to the soul, or in anything foreign to our original constitution; but in our essential faculties, unfolded by vigorous and conscientious exertion in the ordinary circumstances assigned by God. To resemble our Creator, we need not fly from society, and entrance ourselves in lonely contemplation and prayer. Such processes might give a feverish strength to one class of emotions, but would result in disproportion, distortion, and sickliness of mind. Our proper work is to approach God by the free and natural unfolding of our highest powers, of understanding, conscience, love, and the moral will.

Shall I be told that by such language, I ascribe to nature the effects which can only be wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit? I anticipate this objection, and wish to meet it by a simple exposition of my views. I would on no account disparage the gracious aids and influences which God imparts to the human soul. The promise of the Holy Spirit is among the most precious

in the sacred volume. Worlds could not tempt me to part with the doctrine of God's intimate connexion with the mind, and of his free and full communications to it. But these views are in no respect at variance with what I have taught of the method, by which we are to grow in the likeness of God. Scripture and experience concur in teaching, that by the Holy Spirit, we are to understand a divine assistance adapted to our moral freedom, and accordant with the fundamental truth, that virtue is the mind's own work. By the Holy Spirit, I understand an aid, which must be gained and made effectual by our own activity; an aid, which no more interferes with our faculties, than the assistance which we receive from our fellow beings; an aid, which silently mingles and conspires with all other helps and means of goodness; an aid by which we unfold our natural powers in a natural order, and by which we are strengthened to understand and apply the resources derived from our munificent Creator. This aid we cannot prize too much, or pray for too earnestly. But wherein, let me ask, does it war with the doctrine, that God is to be approached by the exercise and unfolding of our highest powers and affections, in the ordinary circumstances of human life?

I repeat it, to resemble our Maker we need not quarrel with our nature or our lot. Our present state, made up, as it is, of aids and trials, is worthy of God, and may be used throughout to assimilate us to him. For example, our domestic ties, the relations of neighbourhood and country, the daily interchanges of thoughts and feelings, the daily occasions of kindness, the daily claims of want and suffering, these and the other circumstances of our social state, form the best sphere and school for that benevolence, which is God's brightest

attribute ; and we should make a sad exchange, by substituting for these natural aids, any self-invented artificial means of sanctity. Christianity, our great guide to God, never leads us away from the path of nature, and never wars with the unsophisticated dictates of conscience. We approach our Creator by every right exertion of the powers he gives us. Whenever we invigorate the understanding by honestly and resolutely seeking truth, and by withstanding whatever might warp the judgment ; whenever we invigorate the conscience by following it in opposition to the passions ; whenever we receive a blessing gratefully, bear a trial patiently, or encounter peril or scorn with moral courage ; whenever we perform a disinterested deed ; whenever we lift up the heart in true adoration to God ; whenever we war against a habit or desire which is strengthening itself against our higher principles ; whenever we think, speak, or act, with moral energy, and resolute devotion to duty, be the occasion ever so humble, obscure, familiar ; then the divinity is growing within us, and we are ascending towards our Author. True religion thus blends itself with common life. We are thus to draw nigh to God, without forsaking men. We are thus, without parting with our human nature, to clothe ourselves with the divine.

My views on the great subject of this discourse have now been given. I shall close with a brief consideration of a few objections, in the course of which I shall offer some views of the christian ministry, which this occasion and the state of the world, seem to me to demand.—I anticipate from some an objection to this discourse, drawn as they will say from experience. I may be told, that I have talked of the godlike capacities of

human nature, and have spoken of man as a divinity; and where, it will be asked, are the warrants of this high estimate of our race? I may be told that I dream, and that I have peopled the world with the creatures of my lonely imagination. What! Is it only in dreams, that beauty and loveliness have beamed on me from the human countenance, that I have heard tones of kindness, which have thrilled through my heart, that I have found sympathy in suffering, and a sacred joy in friendship? Are all the great and good men of past ages only dreams? Are such names as Moses, Socrates, Paul, Alfred, Milton, only the fictions of my disturbed slumbers? Are the great deeds of history, the discoveries of philosophy, the creations of genius, only visions? Oh! no. I do not dream when I speak of the divine capacities of human nature. It is a real page in which I read of patriots and martyrs, of Fenelon and Howard, of Hampden and Washington. And tell me not that these were prodigies, miracles, immeasurably separated from their race; for the very reverence, which has treasured up and hallowed their memories, the very sentiments of admiration and love with which their names are now heard, show that the principles of their greatness are diffused through all your breasts. The germs of sublime virtue are scattered liberally on your earth. How often have I seen in the obscurity of domestic life, a strength of love, of endurance, of pious trust, of virtuous resolution, which in a public sphere would have attracted public homage. I cannot but pity the man, who recognises nothing godlike in his own nature. I see the marks of God in the heavens and the earth; but how much more in a liberal intellect, in magnanimity, in unconquerable rectitude, in a philanthropy which forgives every wrong, and which never

despairs of the cause of Christ and human virtue. I do and I must reverence human nature. Neither the sneers of a worldly skepticism, nor the groans of a gloomy theology, disturb my faith in its godlike powers and tendencies. I know how it is despised, how it has been oppressed, how civil and religious establishments have for ages conspired to crush it. I know its history. I shut my eyes on none of its weaknesses and crimes. I understand the proofs, by which despotism demonstrates, that man is a wild beast, in want of a master, and only safe in chains. But injured, trampled on, and scorned as our nature is, I still turn to it with intense sympathy and strong hope. The signatures of its origin and its end are impressed too deeply to be ever wholly effaced. I bless it for its kind affections, for its strong and tender love. I honor it for its struggles against oppression, for its growth and progress under the weight of so many chains and prejudices, for its achievements in science and art, and still more for its examples of heroic and saintly virtue. These are marks of a divine origin and the pledges of a celestial inheritance ; and I thank God that my own lot is bound up with that of the human race.

But another objection starts up. It may be said, 'Allow these views to be true ; are they fitted for the pulpit ? fitted to act on common minds ? They may be prized by men of cultivated intellect and taste ; but can the multitude understand them ? Will the multitude feel them ? On whom has a minister to act ? On men immersed in business, and buried in the flesh ; on men, whose whole power of thought has been spent on pleasure or gain ; on men, chained by habit, and wedded to sin. Sooner may adamant be riven by a child's touch than the human heart be pierced by re-

fined and elevated sentiment. Gross instruments will alone act on gross minds. Men sleep, and nothing but thunder, nothing but flashes from the everlasting fire of hell, will thoroughly wake them.'

I have all along felt that such objections would be made to the views I have urged. But they do not move me. I answer, that I think these views singularly adapted to the pulpit, and I think them full of power. The objection is that they are refined. But I see God accomplishing his noblest purposes by what may be called refined means. All the great agents of nature, attraction, heat, and the principle of life, are refined, spiritual, invisible, acting gently, silently, imperceptibly; and yet brute matter feels their power, and is transformed by them into surpassing beauty. The electric fluid, unseen, unselt, and everywhere diffused, is infinitely more efficient, and ministers to infinitely nobler productions, than when it breaks forth in thunder. Much less can I believe, that in the moral world, noise, menace, and violent appeals to gross passions, to fear and selfishness, are God's chosen means of calling forth spiritual life, beauty, and greatness. It is seldom that human nature throws off all susceptibility of grateful and generous impressions, all sympathy with superior virtue; and here are springs and principles to which a generous teaching, if simple, sincere, and fresh from the soul, may confidently appeal.

It is said, men cannot understand the views which seem to me so precious. This objection I am anxious to repel, for the common intellect has been grievously kept down and wronged through the belief of its incapacity. The pulpit would do more good, were not the mass of men looked upon and treated as children. Happily for the race, the time is passing away, in which

intellect was thought the monopoly of a few, and the majority were given over to hopeless ignorance. Science is leaving her solitudes to enlighten the multitude. How much more may religious teachers take courage to speak to men on subjects, which are nearer to them than the properties and laws of matter, I mean their own souls. The multitude, you say, want capacity to receive great truths relating to their spiritual nature. But what, let me ask you, is the christian religion? A spiritual system, intended to turn men's minds upon themselves, to frame them to watchfulness over thought, imagination, and passion, to establish them in an intimacy with their own souls. What are all the christian virtues, which men are exhorted to love and seek? I answer, pure and high motions or determinations of the mind. That refinement of thought, which, I am told, transcends the common intellect, belongs to the very essence of Christianity. In confirmation of these views, the human mind seems to me to be turning itself more and more inward, and to be growing more alive to its own worth, and its capacities of progress. The spirit of education shows this, and so does the spirit of freedom. There is a spreading conviction that man was made for a higher purpose than to be a beast of burden, or a creature of sense. The divinity is stirring within the human breast, and demanding a culture and a liberty worthy of the child of God. Let religious teaching correspond to this advancement of the mind. Let it rise above the technical, obscure, and frigid theology which has come down to us from times of ignorance, superstition, and slavery. Let it penetrate the human soul, and reveal it to itself. No preaching, I believe, is so intelligible, as that which is true to human nature, and helps men to read their own spirits.

But the objection which I have stated not only represents men as incapable of understanding, but still more of being moved, quickened, sanctified, and saved, by such views as I have given. If by this objection nothing more is meant, than that these views are not alone or of themselves sufficient, I shall not dispute it; for true and glorious as they are, they do not constitute the whole truth, and I do not expect great moral effects from narrow and partial views of our nature.

have spoken of the godlike capacities of the But other and very different elements enter into the human being. Man has animal propensities as well as intellectual and moral powers. He has a body as well as mind. He has passions to war with reason, and self-love with conscience. He is a free being, and a tempted being, and, thus constituted he may and does sin, and often sins grievously. To such a being, religion, or virtue, is a conflict, requiring great spiritual effort, put forth in habitual watchfulness and prayer; and all the motives are needed, by which force and constancy may be communicated to the will. I exhort not the preacher, to talk perpetually of man as 'made but a little lower than the angels.' I would not narrow him to any class of topics. Let him adapt himself to our whole and various nature. Let him summon to his aid all the powers of this world, and the world to come. Let him bring to bear on the conscience and the heart, God's milder and more awful attributes, the promises and threatenings of the divine word, the lessons of history, the warnings of experience. Let the wages of sin here and hereafter be taught clearly and earnestly. But amidst the various motives to spiritual effort, which belong to the minister, none are more quickening than those drawn from the soul itself, and from God's desire

and purpose to exalt it, by every aid consistent with its freedom. These views I conceive are to mix with all others, and without them all others fail to promote a generous virtue. Is it said, that the minister's proper work is, to preach Christ and not the dignity of human nature? I answer, that Christ's greatness is manifested in the greatness of the nature which he was sent to redeem; and that his chief glory consists in this, that he came to restore God's image where it was obscured or effaced, and to give an everlasting impulse and life to what is divine within us. Is it said, that the malignity of sin is to be the minister's great theme? I answer, that this malignity can only be understood and felt, when sin is viewed as the ruin of God's noblest work, as darkening a light brighter than the sun, as carrying discord, bondage, disease, and death into a mind framed for perpetual progress towards its Author. Is it said, that terror is the chief instrument of saving the soul? I answer, that if by terror, be meant a rational and moral fear, a conviction and dread of the unutterable evil incurred by a mind which wrongs, betrays, and destroys itself, then I am the last to deny its importance. But a fear like this, which regards the debasement of the soul as the greatest of evils, is plainly founded upon and proportioned to our conceptions of the greatness of our nature. The more common terror, excited by vivid images of torture and bodily pain, is a very questionable means of virtue. When strongly awakened, it generally injures the character, breaks men into cowards and slaves, brings the intellect to cringe before human authority, makes man abject before his Maker, and, by a natural reaction of the mind, often terminates in a presumptuous confidence, altogether distinct from virtuous self-respect, and singularly hostile to the unassuming,

charitable spirit of Christianity. The preacher should rather strive to fortify the soul against physical pains, than to bow it to their mastery, teaching it to dread nothing in comparison with sin, and to dread sin as the ruin of a noble nature.

Men, I repeat it, are to be quickened and raised by appeals to their highest principles. Even the convicts of a prison may be touched by kindness, generosity, and especially by a tone, look, and address, expressing hope and respect for their nature. I know, that the doctrine of ages has been, that terror, restraint, and bondage are the chief safeguards of human virtue and peace. But we have begun to learn that affection, confidence, respect, and freedom are mightier as well as nobler agents. Men can be wrought upon by generous influences. I would that this truth were better understood by religious teachers. From the pulpit generous influences too seldom proceed. In the church men too seldom hear a voice to quicken and exalt them. Religion, speaking through her public organs, seems often to forget her natural tone of elevation. The character of God, the principles of his government, his relations to the human family, the purposes for which he brought us into being, the nature which he has given us, and the condition in which he has placed us, these and the like topics, though the sublimest which can enter the mind, are not unfrequently so set forth as to narrow and degrade the hearers, disheartening and oppressing with gloom the timid and sensitive, and infecting coarser minds with the unhallowed spirit of intolerance, presumption, and exclusive pretension to the favor of God. I know, and rejoice to know, that preaching in its worst forms does good; for so bright and piercing is the light of Christianity, that it penetrates in a measure the thick-

and gloom on which men contrive to involve it. But that evil mixes with the good, I also know; and I should be unfaithful to my deep convictions, did I not say, that human nature requires for its elevation, more generous treatment from the teachers of religion.

I conclude with saying, let the minister cherish a reverence for his own nature. Let him never despise it even in its most forbidding forms. Let him delight in its beautiful and lofty manifestations. Let him hold as one of the great qualifications for his office, a faith in the greatness of the human soul, that faith, which looks beneath the perishing body, beneath the sweat of the laborer, beneath the rags and ignorance of the poor, beneath the vices of the sensual and selfish, and discerns in the depths of the soul a divine principle, a ray of the Infinite Light, which may yet break forth and 'shine as the sun' in the kingdom of God. Let him strive to awaken in men a consciousness of the heavenly treasure within them, a consciousness of possessing what is of more worth than the outward universe. Let hope give life to all his labors. Let him speak to men, as to beings liberally gifted, and made for God. Let him always look round on a congregation with the encouraging trust, that he has hearers prepared to respond to the simple, unaffected utterance of great truths, and to the noblest workings of his own mind. Let him feel deeply for those, in whom the divine nature is overwhelmed by the passions. Let him sympathize tenderly with those, in whom it begins to struggle, to mourn for sin, to thirst for a new life. Let him guide and animate to higher and diviner virtue those, in whom it has gained strength. Let him strive to infuse courage, enterprise, devout trust, and an inflexible will, into man's labors for their own perfection. In one

word, let him cherish an unfaltering and growing faith in God as the Father and quickener of the human mind, and in Christ as its triumphant and immortal friend. That by such preaching he is to work miracles; I do not say. That he will rival in sudden and outward effects what is wrought by the preachers of a low and terrifying theology, I do not expect or desire. That all will be made better, I am far from believing. His office is, to act on free beings, who after all must determine themselves; who have power to withstand all foreign agency; who are to be saved, not by mere preaching, but by their own prayers and toil. Still I believe that such a minister will be a benefactor beyond all praise to the human soul. I believe, and know, that on those, who will admit his influence, he will work deeply, powerfully, gloriously. His function is the sublimest under heaven; and his reward will be, a growing power of spreading truth, virtue, moral strength, love, and happiness, without limit, and without end.

DISCOURSE
AT THE DEDICATION OF DIVINITY HALL.
CAMBRIDGE, 1806.

LUKE IV. 32.

HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER.

We are assembled to set apart and consecrate this building to the education of teachers of the christian religion. Regarding, as we do, this religion as God's best gift to mankind, we look on these simple walls, reared for this holy and benevolent work, with an interest which more splendid edifices, dedicated to inferior purposes, would fail to inspire. We thank God for the zeal which has erected them. We thank him for the hope, that here will be trained, and hence will go forth, able ministers of the New Testament. God accept our offering and fulfil our trust. May he shed on this spot the copious dew of his grace, and compass it with his favor as with a shield.

To what end do we devote this building? How may this end be accomplished? These questions will guide our present reflections.

To what end is this edifice dedicated? The answer to this question may be given in various forms, or expanded into various particulars. From this wide range of topics, I shall select one, which, from its comprehensiveness and importance, will be acknowledged to de-

serve peculiar attention. I say then, that this ministry is dedicated to the training of ministers whose words, like their master's, shall be with power. Power, energy, efficiency, this is the endowment to be communicated most assiduously by a theological institution. Such is the truth, which I would now develop. My meaning may easily be explained. By the power, of which I have spoken, I mean that strong action of the understanding, conscience, and heart, on moral and religious truth, through which the preacher is quickened and qualified to awaken the same strong action in others. I mean energy of thought and feeling in the minister, creating for itself an appropriate expression, and propagating itself to the hearer. What this power is, all men understand by experience. All know, how the same truth differs, when dispensed by different lips; how doctrines, inert and uninteresting as expounded by one teacher, come fraught with life from another; arrest attention, rouse emotion, and give a new spring to the soul. In declaring this power to be the great object of a theological institution, I announce no discovery. I say nothing new. But this truth, like many others, is too often acknowledged only to be slighted. It needs to be brought out, to be made prominent, to become the living, guiding principle of education for the ministry. Power, then, I repeat it, is the great good to be communicated by theological institutions. To impart knowledge is indeed their indispensable duty, but not their whole, nor most arduous, nor highest work. Knowledge is the means, power the end. The former, when accumulated, as it often is, with no strong action of the intellect, no vividness of conception, no depth of conviction, no force of feeling, is of little or no worth to the preacher. It comes from him as a faint echo, with nothing of that mysterious energy, which

strong conviction throws into style and utterance. His ~~breath~~, which should kindle, chills his hearers, and the nobler the truth with which he is charged, the less he succeeds in carrying it far into men's souls. We want more than knowledge. We want force of thought, seeing and purpose. What profits it to arm the pupil with weapons of heavenly temper, unless his hands be nerved to wield them with vigor and success? The word of God is indeed quick and powerful, and sharper than any double-edged sword; but when committed to him who has no kindred energy, it does not and cannot penetrate the mind. Power is the attribute, which crowns all a minister's accomplishments. It is the centre and great result, in which all his studies, meditations and prayers should meet, and without which his office becomes a form and a show. And yet how seldom is it distinctly and earnestly proposed as the chief qualification for the sacred office? How seldom do we meet it? How often does preaching remind us of a child's arrows shot against a fortress of adamant. How often does it seem a mock fight. We do not see the earnestness of real warfare; of men bent on the accomplishment of a great good. We want powerful ministers, not graceful declaimers, nor elegant essayists, but men fitted to act on men, to make themselves *felt* in society.

I have said that the communication of power is the great end of a theological institution. Let not this word give alarm. I mean by it, as you must have seen, a very different power from that which ministers once possessed, and which some still covet. There have been times, when the clergy were rivals in dominion with kings; when the mitre even towered above the diadem; when the priest, shutting God's word on the people, and converting its threatenings and promises into instruments

of usurpation, was able to persuade men, that the soul's everlasting doom hung on his ministry, and even succeeded in establishing a sway over very fierce and ferocious spirits, which revolted against all other control. This power, suited to barbarous times, and, as some imagine, a salutary element of society in rude, lawless ages, has been shaken almost everywhere by the progress of intellect; and in Protestant countries, it is openly reprobated and renounced. It is not to reestablish this, that these walls have been reared. We trust, that they are to be bulwarks against its encroachments, and that they are to send forth influences more and more hostile to every form of spiritual usurpation.

Am I told that this kind of power is now so fallen and so contemned, that to disclaim or to oppose it seems a waste of words? I should rejoice to yield myself to this belief. But unhappily the same enslaving and degrading power may grow up under Protestants as under Catholic institutions. In all ages and all churches, terror consers a tremendous influence on him who can spread it; and through this instrument, the Protestant minister, whilst disclaiming Papal pretensions, is able, if so minded, to build up a spiritual despotism. That this means of subjugating the mind should be too freely used and dreadfully perverted, we cannot wonder, when we consider that no talent is required to spread a panic, and that coarse minds and hard hearts are signally gifted for this work of torture. The progress of intelligence is undoubtedly narrowing the power, which the minister gains by excessive appeals to men's fears, but has by no means destroyed it; for as yet the intellect, even in Protestant countries, has exerted itself comparatively little on religion; and, ignorant, begotten a passive, servile state of mind, the preacher, if so disposed, finds little difficulty

in breaking some, if not many spirits, by terror. The effects of this ill-gotten power are mournful on the teacher and the taught. The panic-smitten hearer, instructed that safety is to be found in bowing to an unintelligible creed, and too agitated for deliberate and vigorous thought, resigns himself a passive subject to his spiritual guides, and receives a faith by which he is debased. Nor does the teacher escape unhurt; for all usurpation on men's understandings begets, in him who exercises it, a dread and resistance of the truth which threatens its subversion. Hence ministers have so often fallen behind their age, and been the chief foes of the master spirits who have improved the world. They have felt their power totter at the tread of an independent thinker. By a kind of instinct, they have fought against the light, before which the shades of superstition were vanishing, and have received their punishment in the darkness and degradation of their own minds. To such power as we have described, we do not dedicate these walls. We would not train here, if we could, agents of terror, to shake weak nerves, to disease the imagination, to lay a spell on men's faculties, to guard a creed by fires more consuming than those which burnt on Sinai. Believing that this method of dominion is among the chief obstructions to an enlightened faith, and abhorring tyranny in the pulpit as truly as on the throne, we would consecrate this edifice to the subversion, not the participation, of this unhallowed power.

Is it then asked, what I mean by the power which this institution should aim to communicate? I mean power to act on intelligent and free beings, by means proportioned to their nature. I mean power to call into healthy exertion the intellect, conscience, affections, and

moral will of the hearer. I mean force of conception, and earnestness of style and elevation. I mean, that truth should be a vital principle in the soul of the teacher, and should come from him as a reality. I mean, that his whole moral and intellectual faculties should be summoned to his work ; that a tone of force and resolution should pervade his efforts ; that, throwing his soul into his cause, he should plead it with urgency, and should concentrate on his hearers all the influences which consist with their moral freedom.

Every view which we can take of the ministry will teach us, that nothing less than the whole amount of power in the individual can satisfy its demands. This we learn, if we consider, first, the weight and grandeur of the subjects which the minister is to illustrate and enforce. He is to speak of God, the King and Father Eternal, whose praise no tongue of men or angels can worthily set forth. He is to speak of the soul, that ray of the Divinity, the partaker of God's own immortality, to which the outward universe was made to minister, and which, if true to itself, will one day be clad with a beauty and grandeur such as nature's loveliest and sublimest scenery never wears. He is to speak, not of this world only, but of invisible and more advanced states of being ; of a world too spiritual for the fleshly eye to see, but of which a presage and earnest may be found in the enlightened and purified mind. He has to speak of virtue, of human perfection, of the love which is due to the Universal Father and to fellow-beings, of the intercourse of the soul with its Creator, and of all the duties of life as hallowed and elevated by a reference to God and to the future world. He has to speak of sin, that essential evil, that only evil, which, by its unutterable baseness,

makes all other calamities unworthy of the name. He is to treat, not of ordinary life, nor of the most distinguished agents in ordinary history, but of God's supernatural interpositions ; of his most sensible and immediate providence ; of men inspired and empowered to work the most important revolutions in society ; and especially of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the theme of prophecy, the revealer of grace and truth, the saviour from sin, the conqueror of death, who hath left us an example of immaculate virtue, whose love passeth knowledge, and whose history, combining the strange and touching contrasts of the cross, the resurrection, and a heavenly throne, surpasses all other records in interest and grandeur. He has to speak, not of transitory concerns, but of happiness and misery transcending in duration and degree the most joyful and suffering condition of the present state. He has to speak of the faintly shadowed, but solemn consummation of this world's eventful history ; of the coming of the Son of Man, the resurrection, the judgment, the retributions of the last day. Here are subjects of intense interest. They claim and should call forth the mind's whole power, and are infinitely wronged when uttered with cold lips and from an unmoved heart.

If we next consider the effects, which, through these truths, the minister is to produce, we shall see that his function demands and should be characterised by power. The first purpose of a minister's function, which is to enlighten the understanding on the subject of religion, is no easy task ; for all religious truth is not obvious, plain, shining with an irresistible evidence, so that a glance of thought will give the hearer possession of the teacher's mind. We sometimes talk, indeed, of the simplicity of religion, as if it were as easy as a child's book,

as if it might be taught with as little labor as the alphabet. But all analogy forbids us to believe, that the sublimest truths can be imparted or gained with little thought or effort, and the prevalent ignorance confirms this presumption. Obstacles neither few nor small to a clear apprehension of religion, are found in the invisibility of its objects ; in the disproportion between the Infinite Creator and the finite mind ; in the proneness of human beings to judge of superior natures by their own, and to transfer to the spiritual world the properties of matter and the affections of sense ; in the perpetual pressure of outward things upon the attention ; in the darkness which sin spreads over the intellect ; in the ignorance which yet prevails in regard to the human mind ; and, though last not least, in the errors and superstitions which have come down to us from past ages, and which exert an unsuspected power on our whole modes of religious thinking. These obstacles are strengthened by the general indisposition to investigate religion freely and thoroughly. The tone of authority with which it has been taught, the terror and obscure phraseology in which it has been shrouded, and the unlovely aspect which it has been made to wear, have concurred to repel from it deliberate and earnest attention, and to reconcile men to a superficial mode of thinking which they would scorn on every other subject. Add to this, that the early inculcation and frequent repetition of religion, by making it familiar, expose it to neglect. The result of all these unfavorable influences is, that religious truth is more indistinctly apprehended, is more shadowy and unreal to the multitude, than any other truth ; and, unhappily, this remark applies with almost equal truth to all ranks of society and all orders of intellect. The loose conceptions of Christianity which prevail among

the high as well as the low, do not deserve the name of knowledge. The loftiest minds among us seldom put forth their strength on the very subject, for which intelligence was especially given. A great revolution is needed here. The human intellect is to be brought to act on religion with new power. It ought to prosecute this inquiry with an intenseness, with which no other subject is investigated. And does it require no energy in the teacher, to awaken this power and earnestness of thought in others, to bring religion before the intellect as its worthiest object, to raise men's traditional, lifeless, superficial faith into deliberate profound conviction?

That the ministry should be characterised by power and energy, will be made more apparent, if we consider that it is instituted to quicken, not only the intellect but the conscience; to enforce the obligations, as well as illustrate the truth of religion. It is an important branch of the minister's duty, to bring home the general principles of duty to the individual mind; to turn it upon itself; to rouse it to a resolute, impartial survey of its whole responsibilities and ill deserts. And is not energy needed to break through the barriers of pride and self-love, and to place the individual before a tribunal in his own breast, as solemn and searching as that which awaits him at the last day? It is not indeed so difficult to rouse, in the timid and susceptible, a morbid susceptibility of conscience, to terrify weak people into the idea, that they are to answer for sins inherited from the first fallen pair, and entailed upon them by a stern necessity. But this feverish action of the conscience is its weakness, not its strength; and the teacher who would rouse the moral sense to discriminating judg-

ment and healthful-feeling, has need of a vastly higher kind of power than is required to darken and disease it.

Another proof that the ministry should be characterised by power, is given to us by the consideration, that it is intended to act on the affections; to exhibit religion in its loveliness and venerableness, as well as in its truth and obligation; to concentrate upon it all the strength of moral feeling. The christian teacher has a great work to do in the human heart. His function has, for its highest aim, to call-forth towards God the profoundest awe, attachment, trust, and joy, of which human nature is capable. Religion demands, that He who is supreme in the universe, should be supreme in the human soul. God, to whom belongs the mysterious and incommunicable attribute of Infinity; who is the fulness and source of life and thought, of beauty and power, of love and happiness; on whom we depend more intimately than the stream on the fountain, or the plant on the earth in which it is rooted,—this Great Being ought to call forth peculiar emotions, and to move and sway the soul, as he pervades creation, with unrivalled energy. It is his distinction, that he unites in his nature infinite majesty and infinite benignity, the most awful with the most endearing attributes, the tenderest relations to the individual with the grandeur of the universal sovereign; and, through this nature, he is fitted to act on the mind as no other being can,—to awaken a love more intense, a veneration more profound, a sensibility of which the soul knows not its capacity until it is penetrated and touched by God. To bring the created mind into living union with the Infinite Mind, so that it shall respond to him through its whole being, is the noblest function, which this harmonious and beneficent

universe performs. For this, revelation was given. For this, the ministry was instituted. The christian teacher is to make more audible, and to interpret the voice, in which the beauty and awfulness of nature, the heavens, the earth; fruitful seasons, storms and thunders, recall men to their Creator. Still more, he is to turn them to the clearer, milder, more attractive splendors, in which the Divinity is revealed by Jesus Christ. His great purpose, I repeat it, is, to give vitality to the thought of God in the human mind ; to make his presence felt ; to make him a reality, and the most powerful reality to the soul. And is not this a work requiring energy of thought and utterance ? Is it easy, in a world of matter and sense, amidst crowds of impressions rushing in from abroad, amidst the constant and visible agency of second causes, amidst the anxieties, toils, pleasures, dissipations, and competitions of life, in the stir and bustle of society, and in an age when luxury wars with spirituality, and the developement of nature's resources is turning men's trust from the Creator,—is it easy, amidst these gross interests and distracting influences, to raise men's minds to the invisible Divinity, to fix impressions of God deeper and more enduring than those which are received from all other beings, to make him the supreme object, spring, and motive of the soul ?

We have seen how deep and strong are the affections which the minister is to awaken towards God. But strength of religious impression is not his whole work. From the imperfections of our nature, this very strength has its dangers. Religion, in becoming fervent, often becomes morbid. It is the minister's duty to inculcate a piety characterised by wisdom as much as by warmth ; to mediate, if I may so speak, between the reason and the affections, so that, with joint energy and in blessed

harmony, they may rise together and offer up the undivided soul to God. Whoever understands the strength of emotion in man's nature, and how hardly the balance of the soul is preserved, need not be told of the arduousness of this work. Devout people, through love of excitement, and through wrong views of the love of God, are apt to cherish the devotional feelings, at the expense, if not to the exclusion, of other parts of our nature. They seem to imagine that piety, like the Upas tree, makes a desert where it grows ; that the mind, if not the body, needs a cloister. The natural movements of the soul are repressed ; the social affections damped ; the grace, and ornament, and innocent exhilarations of life frowned upon ; and a gloomy, repulsive religion is cultivated, which, by way of compensation for its privations, claims a monopoly of God's favor, abandoning all to his wrath who will not assume its own sad livery and echo its own sepulchral tones. Through such exhibitions, religion has lost its honor ; and though the most ennobling of all sentiments, dilating the soul with vast thoughts and an unbounded hope, has been thought to contract and degrade it. The minister is to teach an earnest but enlightened religion ; a piety, which, far from wasting or eradicating, will protect, nourish, freshen the mind's various affections and powers ; which will add force to reason, as well as ardor to the heart ; which will at once bind us to God, and cement and multiply our ties to our families, our country, and mankind ; which will heighten the relish of life's pleasures, whilst it kindles an unquenchable thirst for a purer happiness in the life to come. Religion does not mutilate our nature. It does not lay waste our human interests and affections, that it may erect for God a throne amidst cheerless and solitary ruins, but widens the range of thought, feeling, and

enjoyment. Such is religion; and the christian ministry, having for its end the communication of this healthful, well-proportioned, and all-comprehending piety, demands every energy of thought, feeling, and utterance, which the individual can bring to the work.

The time would fail me to speak of the other affections and sentiments which the ministry is instituted to excite and cherish, and I hasten to another object of the christian teacher, which, to those who know themselves, will peculiarly illustrate the power which his office demands. It is his duty to rouse men to self-conflict, to warfare with the evil in their own hearts. This is in truth the supreme evil. The sorest calamities of life, sickness, poverty, scorn, dungeons, and death, form a less amount of desolation and suffering than is included in that one word, sin—in revolt from God, in disloyalty to conscience, in the tyranny of the passions, in the thraldom of the soul's noblest powers. To redeem men from sin was Christ's great end. To pierce them with a new consciousness of sin, so that they shall groan under it, and strive against it, and through prayer and watching master it, is an essential part of the minister's work. Let him not satisfy himself with awakening, by his eloquence, occasional emotions of gratitude or sympathy. He must rouse the soul to solemn, stern resolve against its own deep and cherished corruptions, or he only makes a show of assault, and leaves the foe intrenched and unbroken within. We see, then, the arduousness of the minister's work. He is called to war with the might of the human passions, with the whole power of moral evil. He is to enlist men, not for a crusade, nor for extermination of heretics, but to fight a harder battle within, to expel sin, in all its forms, and especially their besetting

sins, from the strong holds of the heart. I know no task so arduous, none which demands equal power.

I shall take but one more view of the objects for which the christian ministry was instituted, and from which we infer that it should be fraught with energy. It is the duty of the christian teacher to call forth in the soul, a conviction of its immortality, a thirst for a higher existence, and a grandeur and elevation of sentiment, becoming a being who is to live, enjoy, and advance, forever. His business is with men, not as inhabitants of this world, but as related to invisible beings, and to purer and happier worlds. The minister should look with reverence on the human soul as having within itself the germ of heaven. He should recognise, in the ignorant and unimproved, vast spiritual faculties given for perpetual enlargement, just as the artist of genius sees in the unhewn marble the capacity of being transformed into a majesty and grace, which will command the admiration of ages. In correspondence with these views, let him strive to quicken men to a consciousness of their inward nature and of its affinity with God, and to raise their steadfast aim and hope to its interminable progress and felicity. Such is his function. Perhaps I may be told, that men are incapable of rising, under the best instruction, to this height of thought and feeling. But let us never despair of our race. There is, I am sure, in the human soul, a deep consciousness, which responds to him, who sincerely, and with the language of reality, speaks to it of the great and everlasting purposes for which it was created. There are sublime instincts in man. There is in human nature, a want which the world cannot supply; a thirst for objects on which to pour forth more fervent admiration and love,

than visible things awaken; a thirst for the unseen; the infinite, and the everlasting. Most of you who hear, have probably had moments, when a new light has seemed to dawn, a new life to stir within you; when you have aspired after an unknown good; when you have been touched by moral greatness and disinterested love; when you have longed to break every chain of selfishness and sensuality, and enjoy a purer being. It is on this part of our nature that religion is founded. To this Christianity is addressed. The power to speak to this, is the noblest which God has imparted to man or angel, and should be coveted above all things by the christian teacher.

The need of power in the ministry has been made apparent, from the greatness of the truths to be dispensed and the effects to be wrought by the christian teacher. The question then comes, How may the student of theology be aided in gaining or cherishing this power? Under what influences should he be placed? What are the springs or foundations of the energy which he needs? How may he be quickened and trained to act most efficiently on the minds of men? In answering these questions, we of course determine the character which belongs to a theological institution, the spirit which it should cherish, the discipline, the mode of teaching, the excitements, which it should employ. From this wide range, I shall select a few topics which are recommended at once by their own importance and by the circumstances in which we are now placed.

I. To train the student to power of thought and utterance, let him be left, and still more, encouraged, to free investigation. Without this, a theological institution becomes a prison to the intellect and a nuisance to the church. The mind grows by free action. Con-

fine it to beaten paths, prescribe to it the results in which all study must end, and you rob it of elasticity and life. It will never spread to its full dimensions. Teach the young man, that the instructions of others are designed to quicken, not supersede his own activity; that he has a divine intellect for which he is to answer to God; and that to surrender it to another is to cast the crown from his head and to yield up his noblest birthright. Encourage him, in all great questions, to hear both sides, and to meet fairly the point of every hostile argument. Guard him against tampering with his own mind, against silencing its whispers and objections, that he may enjoy a favorite opinion undisturbed. Do not give him the shadow for the substance of freedom, by telling him to inquire, but prescribing to him the convictions at which he must stop. Better show him honestly his chains, than mock the slave with the show of liberty.

I know the objection to this course. It puts to hazard, we are told, the religious principles of the young. The objection is not without foundation. The danger is not unreal. But I know no method of forming a manly intellect, or a manly character, without danger. Peril is the element in which power is developed. Remove the youth from every hazard, keep him in deadening strings lest he should stray into forbidden paths, surround him with down lest he should be injured by a fall, shield him from wind and storms, and you doom him to perpetual infancy. All liberty is perilous, as the despot truly affirms; but who would therefore seek shelter under a despot's throne? Freedom of will is almost a tremendous gift; but still, a free agent, with all his capacity of crime, is infinitely more interesting and noble than the most harmonious and beautiful machine.

Freedom is the nurse of intellectual and moral vigor. Better expose the mind to error, than rob it of hardihood and individuality. Keep not the destined teacher of mankind from the perilous field, where the battle between Truth and Falsehood is fought. Let him grapple with difficulty, sophistry, and error. Truth is a conquest, and no man holds her so fast as he who has won her by conflict.

That cases of infidelity may occur in institutions conducted on free principles, is very possible, though our own experience gives no ground for fear. But the student, who, with all the aids to christian belief which are furnished in a theological seminary, still falls a prey to skepticism, is not the man to be trusted with the cause of Christ. He is radically deficient. He wants that congeniality with spiritual and lofty truths, without which the evidences of religion work no deep conviction, and without which the faith, that might be instilled by a slavish institution, would be of little avail. An upright mind may indeed be disturbed and shaken for a time by the arguments of skepticism; but these will be ultimately repelled, and, like conquered foes, will strengthen the principle by which they have been subdued.

Nothing, I am sure, can give power like a free action of the mind. Accumulate teachers and books, for these are indispensable. But the best teacher is he, who awakens in his pupils the power of thought, and aids them to go alone. It is possible to weaken and encumber the mind by too much help. The very splendor of a teacher's talents may injure the pupil; and a superior man, who is more anxious to spread his own creed and his own praise, than to nourish a strong intellect in others, will only waste his life in multiplying poor copies, and in sending forth into the churches, tame minnies of himself.

To free inquiry, then, we dedicate these walls. We invite into them the ingenuous young man, who prizes liberty of mind more than aught within the gift of sects or of the world. Let Heaven's free air circulate, and Heaven's unobstructed light shine here, and let those who shall be sent hence, go forth, not to echo with servility a creed imposed on their weakness, but to utter, in their own manly tones, what their own free investigation and deep conviction urge them to preach as the truth of God.

2. In the second place, to give power to the teacher, he should be imbued, by all possible inculcation and excitement, with a supreme and invincible love of truth. This is at once the best defence against the perils of free inquiry, and the inspirer of energy both in thought and utterance. The first duty of a rational being is to his own intellect; for it is through soundness and honesty of intellect that he is to learn all other duties. I know no virtue more important and appropriate to a teacher, and especially a religious teacher, than fairness and rectitude of understanding, than a love of truth stronger than the love of gain, honor, life; and yet, so far from being cherished, this virtue has been warred against, hunted down, driven to exile, or doomed to the stake, in almost every christian country, by ministers, churches, religious seminaries, or a maddened populace. In the glorious company of heroes and martyrs, a high rank belongs to him, who, superior to the frowns of the sneers, the pity or the wrath which change of views would bring upon him, and in opposition to the warping influences of patronage, of private friendship, or ambition, keeps his mind chaste, unviolate, a sacred temple for truth, ever open to new light from Heaven; and who, faithful to his deliberate convictions, speaks simply, and

firmly, what his uncorrupted mind believes. This love of truth gives power, for it secures a growing knowledge of truth; and truth is the mighty weapon by which the victories of religion are to be wrought out. This endures whilst error carries with it the seeds of decay. Truth is an emanation from God, a beam of his wisdom, and immutable as its source; and although its first influences may seem to be exceeded by those of error, it grows stronger, and strikes deeper root, amidst the fluctuations and ruins of false opinions. Besides, this loyalty to truth not only leads to its acquisition, but, still more, begets a vital acquaintance with it, a peculiar conviction, which gives directness, energy, and authority, to teaching. A minister, who has been religiously just to his own understanding, speaks with a tone of reality, of calm confidence, of conscious uprightness, which cannot be caught by the servile repeater of other men's notions, or by the passionate champion of an unexamined creed. A look, an accent, a word, from a single-hearted inquirer after truth, expressing his deliberate convictions, has a peculiar power in fortifying the convictions of others. To the love of truth, then, be these walls consecrated, and here may every influence be combined to build it up in the youthful heart.

3. To train powerful ministers, let an institution avail itself of the means of forming a devotional spirit, and imbuing the knowledge of the student with religious sensibility. Every man knows, that a cultivated mind, under strong and generous emotion, acquires new command of its resources, new energy and fulness of thought and expression; whilst, in individuals of native vigor of intellect, feeling almost supplies the place of culture, inspiring the unlettered teacher with a fervid, resistless eloquence, which no apparatus of books, teachers, criticism,

ancient languages and general literature, can impart. This power of sensibility to fertilize and vivify the intellect, is not difficult of explanation. A strong and pure affection concentrates the attention on its objects, fastens on them the whole soul, and thus gives vividness of conception. It associates, intimately, all the ideas which are congenial with itself, and thus causes a rush of thought into the mind in moments of excitement. Indeed, a strong emotion seems to stir up the soul from its foundations, and to attract to itself, and to impregnate with its own fire, whatever elements, conceptions, illustrations, can be pressed into its own service. Hence it is, that even ordinary men, strongly moved, abound in arguments, analogies, and fervent appeals, which nothing but sensibility could have taught. Every minister can probably recollect periods, when devotional feeling has seemed to open a new fountain of thought in the soul. Religious affection instinctively seeks and seizes the religious aspects of things. It discerns the marks of God, and proofs and illustrations of divine truth, in all nature and providence; and seems to surround the mind with an atmosphere which spreads its own warm hues on every object which enters it. This attraction, or affinity, if I may so say, which an emotion establishes among the thoughts which accord with itself, is one of the very important laws of the mind, and is chiefly manifested in poetry, eloquence, and all the higher efforts of intellect by which man sways his fellow beings. Religious feeling, then, is indispensable to a powerful minister. Without it, learning and fancy may please, but cannot move men profoundly and permanently. It is this, which not only suggests ideas, but gives felicity and energy of expression. It prompts 'the words that burn,' those mysterious combinations of speech, which send

the speaker's soul like lightning through his hearers, which breathe new life into old and faded truths, and cause an instantaneous gush of thought and feeling in susceptible minds.

We dedicate this institution, then, to religious feeling. Here let the heart muse, till the fire burns. Here let prayer, joined with meditation on nature and scripture, and on the fervid writings of devout men, awaken the whole strength of the affections. But on no point is caution more needed than on this. Let it never be forgotten, that we want genuine feeling; not its tones, looks, and gestures, not a forced ardor and factitious zeal. Wo to that institution, where the young man is expected to repeat the language of emotion, whether he feel it or not; where perpetual pains are taken, to chafe the mind to a warmth which it cannot sustain. The affections are delicate and must not be tampered with. They cannot be compelled. Hardly anything is more blighting to genuine sensibility, than to assume its tones and badge where it does not exist. Exhort the student to cherish devout feeling, by interourse with God, and with those whom God has touched. But exhort him as strenuously, to abstain from every sign of emotion which the heart does not prompt. Teach him that nothing grieves more the Holy Spirit, or sooner closes the mind against heavenly influences, than insincerity. Teach him to be simple, ingenuous, true to his own soul. Better be cold, than affect to feel. In truth, nothing is so cold as an assumed, noisy enthusiasm. Its best emblem is the northern blast of winter, which freezes as it roars. Be this spot sacred to Christian ingenuousness and sincerity. Let it never be polluted by pretence, by affected fervor, by cant and theatric show.

4. Another source of power in the ministry, is Faith ; by which we mean, not a general belief in the truths of Christianity, but a confidence in the great results, which this religion and the ministry are intended to promote. It has often been observed, that a strong faith tends to realize its objects ; that all things become possible to him who thinks them so. Trust and hope breathe animation and force. He, who despairs of great effects, never accomplishes them. All great works have been the results of a strong confidence, inspiring and sustaining strong exertion. The young man, who cannot conceive of higher effects of the ministry than he now beholds, who thinks, that Christianity has spent all its energies in producing the mediocrity of virtue which characterises christendom, and to whom the human soul seems to have put forth its whole power and to have reached its full growth in religion, has no call to the ministry. Let not such a man put forth his nerveless hands in defence of the christian cause. A voice of confidence has been known to rally a retreating army, and to lead it back to victory ; and this spirit-stirring tone belongs to the leaders of the christian host. The minister, indeed, ought to see and feel, more painfully than other men, the extent and power of moral evil in individuals, in the church, and in the world. Let him weep over the ravages of sin. But let him feel, too, that the mightiest power of the universe, is on the side of truth and virtue ; and with sorrow and fear let him join an unfaltering trust in the cause of human nature. Let him look on men, as on mysterious beings, endued with a spiritual life, with a deep central principle of holy and disinterested love, with an intellectual and moral nature which was made to be receptive of God. To nourish this hopeful spirit, the strengthening con-

fidence, it is important that the minister should understand and feel, that he is not acting alone in his efforts for religion, but in union with God, and Christ; and good beings on earth and in heaven. Let him regard the spiritual renovation of mankind, as God's chief purpose, for which nature and providence are leagued in holy cooperation. Let him feel himself joined in counsel and labor, with that great body of which Christ is the head, with the noble brotherhood of apostles and martyrs; of the just made perfect, and, I will add, of angels; and speaking with a faith becoming this sublime association, he will not speak in vain. To this faith, to prophetic hope, to a devout trust in the glorious issues of Christianity, we dedicate these walls; and may God here train up teachers, worthy to mingle and bear a part, with the holy of both worlds, in the cause of man's redemption.

5. Again, that the ministry may be imbued with new power, it needs a spirit of enterprise and reform. They who enter it, should feel that it may be improved. We live in a stirring, advancing age; and shall not the noblest function on earth partake of the general progress? Why is the future ministry to be a servile continuation of the past? Have all the methods of operating on human beings been tried and exhausted? Are there no unessayed passages to the human heart? If we live in a new era, must not religion be exhibited under new aspects, or in new relations? Is not skepticism taking a new form? Has not Christianity new foes to contend with? And are there no new weapons and modes of warfare, by which its triumphs are to be insured? If human nature is manifesting itself in new lights, and passing through a new and most interesting stage of its progress, shall it still be described by the

commonplaces, and appealed to exclusively by the motives, which belonged to earlier periods of society? May not the mind have become susceptible of nobler incitements, than those which suited ruder times? Shall the minister linger behind his age, and be dragged along, as he often has been, in the last ranks of improvement? Let those who are to assume the ministry be taught, that they have something more to do than handle old topics in old ways, and to walk in beaten and long worn paths. Let them inquire, if new powers and agents may not be brought to bear on the human character. Is it incredible, that the progress of intellect and knowledge should develope new resources for the teacher of religion, as well as for the statesman, the artist, the philosopher? Are there no new combinations and new uses of the elements of thought, as well as of the elements of nature? Is it impossible that in the vast compass of scripture, of nature, of providence, and of the soul, there should be undisclosed or dimly defined truths, which may give a new impulse to the human mind? We dedicate this place, not only to the continuance, but to the improvement of the ministry; and let this improvement begin, at once, in those particulars, where the public, if not the clergy, feel it to be wanted. Let those, who are to be educated here, be admonished against the frigid eloquence, the schoolboy tone, the inanimate diction, too common in the pulpit, and which would be endured nowhere else. Let them speak in tones of truth and nature, and adopt the style and elocution of men, who have an urgent work in hand, and who are thirsting for the regeneration of individuals and society.

6. Another source of power, too obvious to need elucidation, yet too important to be omitted, is, an indepen-

dent spirit. By which I mean, not an unfeeling defiance of the opinions and usages of society, but that moral courage, which, through good report and evil report, reverently hears, and fearlessly obeys, the voice of conscience and God. He who would instruct men must not fear them. He who is to reform society, must not be anxious to keep its level. Dread of opinion effeminate preaching, and takes from truth its pungency. The minister so subdued, may flourish his weapons in the air, to the admiration of spectators, but will never pierce the conscience. The minister, like the good knight, should be without fear. Let him cultivate that boldness of speech for which Paul prayed. Let him not flatter great or small. Let him not wrap up reproof in a decorated verbiage. Let him make no compromise with evil because followed by a multitude, but, for this very cause, lift up against it a more earnest voice. Let him beware of the shackles which society insensibly fastens on the mind and the tongue. Moral courage is not the virtue of our times. The love of popularity is the all-tainting vice of a republic. Besides, the increasing connexion between a minister and the community, whilst it liberalizes the mind, and counteracts professional prejudices, has a tendency to enslave him to opinion, to wear away the energy of virtuous resolution, and to change him from an intrepid guardian of virtue and foe of sin, into a merely elegant and amiable companion. Against this dishonorable cowardice, which smooths the thoughts and style of the teacher, until they glide through the ear and the mind without giving a shock to the most delicate nerves, let the young man be guarded. We dedicate this institution to christian independence. May it send forth brave spirits to the vindication of truth and religion.

7. I shall now close, with naming the chief source of power to the minister; one, indeed, which has been in a measure anticipated, and all along implied, but which ought not to be dismissed without a more distinct annunciation. I refer to that spirit, or frame, or sentiment, in which the love of God, the love of men, the love of duty, meet as their highest result, and in which they are perfected and most gloriously displayed; I mean the spirit of self-sacrifice—the spirit of Martyrdom. This was the perfection of Christ, and it is the noblest inspiration which his followers derive from him.—Say not that this is a height to which the generality of ministers must not be expected to rise. This spirit is of more universal obligation than many imagine. It enters into all the virtues which deeply interest us. In truth, there is no thorough virtue without it. Who is the upright man? He, who would rather die than defraud. Who the good parent? He, to whom his children are dearer than life. Who the good patriot? He, who counts not life dear in his country's cause. Who the philanthropist? He, who forgets himself in an absorbing zeal for the mitigation of human suffering, for the freedom, virtue, and illumination of men. It is not Christianity alone which has taught self-sacrifice. Conscience and the Divinity within us have in all ages borne testimony to its loveliness and grandeur, and history borrows from it her chief splendors. But Christ on his cross has taught it with a perfection unknown before, and his glory consists in the power with which he breathes it. Into this spirit Christ's meanest disciple is expected to drink. How much more the teachers and guides of his church. He who is not moved with this sublime feature of our religion, who cannot rise above himself, who cannot, by his own consciousness, comprehend the kindling energy

and solemn joy, which pain or peril in a noble cause has often inspired—he, to whom this language is a mystery, wants one great mark of his vocation to the sacred office. Let him enlist under any standard rather than the cross. To preach with power, a man must feel Christianity to be worthy of the blood which it has cost; and, espousing it as the chief hope of the human race, must condemn life's ordinary interests, compared with the glory and happiness of advancing it. This spirit of self-exposure and self-surrender, throws into preachers an energy which no other principle can give. In truth, such power resides in disinterestedness, that no man can understand his full capacity of thought and feeling, his strength to do and suffer, until he gives himself, with a single heart, to a great and holy cause. New faculties seem to be created, and more than human might sometimes imparted, by a pure, fervent love. Most of us are probably strangers to the resources of power in our own breasts, through the weight and pressure of the chains of selfishness. We consecrate this institution, then, to that spirit of martyrdom, of disinterested attachment to the christian cause, through which it first triumphed, and for want of which its triumphs are now slow. In an age of luxury and self-indulgence, we would devote these walls to the training of warm, manly, generous spirits. May they never shelter the self-seeking slaves of ease and comfort, pupils of Epicurus rather than of Christ. God send from this place devoted and efficient friends of Christianity and the human race.

My friends, I have insisted on the need, and illustrated the sources, of power in the ministry. To this end, may the institution, in whose behalf we are now met together, be steadily and sacredly devoted. I would say

to its guardians and teachers, Let this be your chief aim. I would say to the students, Keep this in sight in all your studies. Never forget your great vocation ; that you are to prepare yourselves for a strong, deep, and beneficent agency on the minds of your fellow beings. Everywhere I see a demand for the power on which I have now insisted. The cry comes to me from society and from the church. The condition of society needs a more efficient administration of Christianity. Great and radical changes are needed in the community to make it christian. There are those indeed, who, mistaking the courtesies and refinements of civilized life for virtue, see no necessity of a great revolution in the world. But civilisation, in hiding the grossness, does not break the power of evil propensities. Let us not deceive ourselves. Multitudes are living with few thoughts of God, and of the true purpose and glory of their being. Among the nominal believers in a Deity and in a judgment to come, sensuality, and ambition and the love of the world, sit on their thrones, and laugh to scorn the impotence of preaching. Christianity has yet a hard war to wage, and many battles to win ; and it needs intrepid, powerful ministers, who will find courage and excitement, not dismay, in the strength and number of their foes.

Christians, you have seen in this discourse, the purposes and claims of this theological institution. Offer your fervent prayers for its prosperity. Besiege the throne of mercy in its behalf. Cherish it as the dearest hope of our churches. Enlarge its means of usefulness, and let your voice penetrate its walls, calling aloud and importunately for enlightened and powerful teachers. Thus joining in effort with the directors and instructors of this seminary, doubt not that God will here train up ministers worthy to bear his truth to present

and future generations. If on the contrary you and they slumber, you will have erected these walls, not to nourish energy, but to be its tomb, not to bear witness to your zeal, but to be a melancholy monument of fainting effort and betrayed truth.

But let me not cast a cloud over the prospects of this day. In hope I began—with hope I will end. This institution has noble distinctions, and has afforded animating pledges. It is eminently a free institution, an asylum from the spiritual despotism, which, in one shape or another, overspreads the greatest part of christendom. It has already given to the churches a body of teachers, who, in theological acquisitions and ministerial gifts, need not shrink from comparison with their predecessors or cotemporaries. I see in it means and provisions, nowhere surpassed, for training up enlightened, free, magnanimous, self-sacrificing friends of truth. In this hope, let us then proceed to the work, which has brought us together. With trust in God, with love to mankind, with unaffected attachment to christian truth, with earnest wishes for its propagation through all lands and its transmission to remotest ages, let us now, with one heart and one voice, dedicate this edifice to the One living and true God, to Christ and his Church, to the instruction and regeneration of the human soul.

MISCELLANIES.

DAILY PRAYER.

THE scriptures of the old and new Testaments agree in enjoining prayer. Let no man call himself a Christian, who lives without giving a part of life to this duty. We are not taught how often we must pray; but our Lord in teaching us to say, ‘ Give us this day our daily bread,’ implies that we should pray daily. He has even said to us, ‘ pray always ;’ an injunction to be explained indeed with that latitude which many of his precepts require, but which is not to be satisfied, we think, without regular and habitual devotion. As to the particular hours to be given to this duty, every Christian may choose them for himself. Our religion is too liberal and spiritual to bind us to any place or any hour of prayer. But there are parts of the day particularly favorable to this duty, and which, if possible, should be redeemed for it. On these we shall offer a few reflections.

The first of these periods is the morning, which even nature seems to have pointed out to men of different religions, as a fit time for offerings to the Divinity. In

the morning our minds are not so much shaken by worldly cares and pleasures, as in other parts of the day. Retirement and sleep have helped to allay the violence of our feelings, to calm the feverish excitement so often produced by intercourse with men. The hour is a still one. The hurry and tumults of life are not begun, and we naturally share in the tranquillity around us. Having for so many hours lost our hold on the world, we can banish it more easily from the mind, and worship with less divided attention. This then is a favorable time for approaching the invisible Author of our being, for strengthening the intimacy of our minds with him, for thinking upon a future life, and for seeking those spiritual aids which we need in the labors and temptations of every day.

In the morning there is much to feed the spirit of devotion. It offers an abundance of thoughts, friendly to pious feeling. When we look on creation, what a happy and touching change do we witness. A few hours past, the earth was wrapped in gloom and silence. There seemed ‘a pause in nature.’ But now, a new flood of light has broken forth, and creation rises before us in fresher and brighter hues, and seems to rejoice as if it had just received birth from its Author. The sun never sheds more cheerful beams, and never proclaims more loudly God’s glory and goodness, than when he returns after the coldness and dampness of night, and awakens man and inferior animals to the various purposes of their being. A spirit of joy seems breathed over the earth and through the sky. It requires little effort of imagination to read delight in the kindled clouds, or in the fields bright with dew. This is the time, when we can best feel and bless the Power which said, ‘let there be light;’ which ‘set a tabernacle for the sun in

the heavens,' and made him the dispenser of fruitfulness and enjoyment through all regions.

If we next look at ourselves, what materials does the morning furnish for devout thought. At the close of the past day, we were exhausted by our labors, and unable to move without wearisome effort. Our minds were sluggish, and could not be held to the most interesting objects. From this state of exhaustion, we sunk gradually into entire insensibility. Our limbs became motionless ; our senses were shut as in death. Our thoughts were suspended, or only wandered confusedly and without aim. Our friends, and the universe, and God himself were forgotten. And what a change does the morning bring with it ! On waking we find, that sleep, the image of death, has silently infused into us a new life. The weary limbs are braced again. The dim eye has become bright and piercing. The mind is returned from the region of forgetfulness to its old possessions. Friends are met again with a new interest. We are again capable of devout sentiment, virtuous effort, and christian hope. With what subjects of gratitude then does the morning furnish us ? We can hardly recall the state of insensibility from which we have just emerged, without a consciousness of our dependence, or think of the renovation of our powers and intellectual being, without feeling our obligation to God. There is something very touching in the consideration, if we will fix our minds upon it, that God thought of us when we could not think ; that he watched over us, when we had no power to avert peril from ourselves ; that he continued our vital motions, and in due time broke the chains of sleep, and set our imprisoned faculties free. How fit is it at this hour to raise to God the eyes which he has opened, and the arm which he has strengthened ;

to acknowledge his providence ; and to consecrate to him the powers which he has renewed ? How fit that he should be the first object of the thoughts and affections which he has restored ! How fit to employ in his praise the tongue which he has loosed, and the breath which he has spared !

But the morning is a fit time for devotion, not only from its relation to the past night, but considered as the introduction of a new day. To a thinking mind, how natural at this hour are such reflections as the following : —I am now to enter on a new period of my life, to start afresh in my course. I am to return to that world, where I have often gone astray ; to receive impressions which may never be effaced ; to perform actions which will never be forgotten ; to strengthen a character, which will fit me for heaven or hell. I am this day to meet temptations which have often subdued me ; I am to be entrusted again with opportunities of usefulness, which I have often neglected. I am to influence the minds of others, to help in moulding their characters, and in deciding the happiness of their present and future life. How uncertain is this day ! What unseen dangers are before me ! What unexpected changes may await me ! It may be my last day ! It will certainly bring me nearer to death and judgment ! —Now, when entering on a period of life so important yet so uncertain, how fit and natural is it, before we take the first step, to seek the favor of that Being on whom the lot of every day depends, to commit all our interests to his almighty and wise providence, to seek his blessing on our labors and his succor in temptation, and to consecrate to his service the day which he raises upon us. This morning devotion, not only agrees with the sentiments of the heart, but tends to make the day

happy, useful, and virtuous. Having cast ourselves on the mercy and protection of the Almighty, we shall go forth with new confidence to the labors and duties which he imposes. Our early prayer will help to shed an odor of piety through the whole life. God, having first occupied, will more easily recur to our mind. Our first step will be in the right path, and we may hope a happy issue.

So fit and useful is morning devotion, it ought not to be omitted without necessity. If our circumstances will allow the privilege, it is a bad sign, when no part of the morning is spent in prayer. If God find no place in our minds at that early and peaceful hour, he will hardly recur to us in the tumults of life. If the benefits of the morning do not soften us, we can hardly expect the heart to melt with gratitude through the day. If the world then rush in, and take possession of us, when we are at some distance and have had a respite from its cares, how can we hope to shake it off, when we shall be in the midst of it, pressed and agitated by it on every side. Let a part of the morning, if possible, be set apart to devotion; and to this end we should fix the hour of rising, so that we may have an early hour at our own disposal. Our piety is suspicious, if we can renounce, as too many do, the pleasures and benefits of early prayer, rather than forego the senseless indulgence of unnecessary sleep. What! we can rise early enough for business. We can even anticipate the dawn, if a favorite pleasure or an uncommon gain requires the effort. But we cannot rise, that we may bless our great Benefactor, that we may arm ourselves for the severe conflicts to which our principles are to be exposed. We are willing to rush into the world, without thanks

offered, or a blessing sought. From a day thus begun, what ought we to expect but thoughtlessness and guilt.

Let us now consider another part of the day which is favorable to the duty of prayer; we mean the evening. This season, like the morning, is calm and quiet. Our labors are ended. The bustle of life has gone by. The distracting glare of the day has vanished. The darkness which surrounds us favors seriousness, composure, and solemnity. At night the earth fades from our sight, and nothing of creation is left us but the starry heavens, so vast, so magnificent, so serene, as if to guide up our thoughts above all earthly things to God and immortality.

This period should in part be given to prayer, as it furnishes a variety of devotional topics and excitements. The evening is the close of an important division of time, and is therefore a fit and natural season for stopping and looking back on the day. And can we ever look back on a day, which bears no witness to God, and lays no claim to our gratitude? Who is it that strengthens us for daily labor, gives us daily bread, continues our friends and common pleasures, and grants us the privilege of retiring after the cares of the day to a quiet and beloved home? The review of the day will often suggest not only these ordinary benefits, but peculiar proofs of God's goodness, unlooked for successes, singular concurrences of favorable events, signal blessings sent to our friends, or new and powerful aids to our own virtue, which call for peculiar thankfulness. And shall all these benefits pass away unnoticed? Shall we retire to repose as insensible as the wearied brute? How fit and natural is it, to close with pious acknowledgement, the day which has been filled with divine beneficence!

But the evening is the time to review, not only our blessings, but our actions. A reflecting mind will naturally remember at this hour that another day is gone, and gone to testify of us to our judge. How natural and useful to inquire, what report it has carried to heaven. Perhaps we have the satisfaction of looking back on a day, which in its general tenor has been innocent and pure, which, having begun with God's praise, has been spent as in his presence; which has proved the reality of our principles in temptation; and shall such a day end without gratefully acknowledging Him, in whose strength we have been strong, and to whom we owe the powers and opportunities of christian improvement? But no day will present to us recollections of purity unmixed with sin. Conscience, if suffered to inspect faithfully and speak plainly, will recount irregular desires, and defective motives, talents wasted and time misspent; and shall we let the day pass from us without penitently confessing our offences to Him, who has witnessed them, and who has promised pardon to true repentance? Shall we retire to rest with a burden of unlamented and unforgiven guilt upon our consciences? Shall we leave these stains to spread over and sink into the soul? A religious recollection of our lives is one of the chief instruments of piety. If possible, no day should end without it. If we take no account of our sins on the day on which they are committed, can we hope that they will recur to us at a more distant period, that we shall watch against them tomorrow, or that we shall gain the strength to resist them, which we will not implore?

One observation more, and we have done. The evening is a fit time for prayer, not only as it ends the day, but as it immediately precedes the period of repose.

The hours of activity having passed, we are soon to sink into insensibility and sleep. How fit that we resign ourselves to the care of that Being who never sleeps, to whom the darkness is as the light, and whose providence is our only safety! How fit to entreat him, that he would keep us to another day ; or, if our bed should prove our grave, that he would give us a part in the resurrection of the just, and awake us to a purer and immortal life. The most important periods of prayer have now been pointed out. Let our prayers, like the ancient sacrifices, ascend morning and evening. Let our days begin and end with God.

MEANS OF PROMOTING CHRISTIANITY.

We live at a time, when the obligation of extending Christianity is more felt than in many past ages. There is much stir, motion, and zeal around us in this good cause. Even those, who seem not to be burdened by an excess of piety themselves, are in earnest to give it to others. The activity of multitudes is taking strongly this direction ; and as men are naturally restless, and want room for action, and will do mischief rather than do nothing, a philanthropist will rejoice that this new channel is opened for carrying off the superabundant energies of multitudes, even if no other good should result from it.

We hope however much other good. We trust, that, whilst many inferior motives and many fanatical impulses are giving birth and action to large associations in Christendom ; whilst the love of sway in some, and the love of congregating in others, and the passion for doing something great and at a distance in all, are rearing mighty institutions among us—still many sincere Christians are governed in these concerns by a supreme desire of spreading Christianity. They have found the gospel an infinite good, and would communicate it to their fellow beings. They have drunk from the fountain of life, and would send forth the stream to gladden every wilderness and solitary place, and to assuage the thirst of every anxious and afflicted mind. They turn with continual pleasure to the prophetic passages of scripture, and, interpreting them by their wishes, hope a speedy change in the most state of the world, and are impa-

tient to bear a part in this stupendous renovation. That they are doing good we doubt not, though perhaps not in the way which they imagine or would prefer. The immediate and general success of their attempts would perhaps be ultimately injurious to Christianity. They are sending out, together with God's word, corrupt interpretations of some parts of it, which considerably neutralize its saving power, and occasionally make it a positive injury. They are perhaps to do good, not by success, so much as by failure. Almost all great enterprises are accomplished gradually, and by methods which have been learned from many unsuccessful trials, from a slow accumulation of experience. The first laborers often do little more than teach those who come after them what to avoid, and how to labor more effectually than themselves. But be the issue what it may, sincere Christians, who embark in this good work, not from party spirit and self-conceit, as if they and their sect were depositaries of all truth and virtue, but from unaffected philanthropy and attachment to Jesus Christ, will have their reward. Even a degree of extravagance in such a cause may be forgiven. Men are willing, that the imagination should be kindled on other subjects; that the judgment should sometimes slumber, and leave the affections to feed on hopes brighter than reality; that patriotism, and philanthropy, and the domestic affections should sometimes break out in chivalrous enterprises, and should seek their ends by means on which the reason may look coldly. Why then shall we frown on every deviation from the strictest judiciousness in a concern which appeals so strongly to the heart as the extension of Christianity? Men may be too rational as well as too fervent; and the man, whose pious wish of the speedy conversion of the world arises into a strong

anticipation of the event, and who, taking his measure of duty from the primitive disciples, covets sacrifices in so good a cause, is an incomparably nobler spirit than he, who, believing that the moral condition of the world is as invariable as the laws of material nature, and seeking pretexts for sloth in a heart-chilling philosophy, has no concern for the multitudes who are sitting in darkness, and does nothing to spread the religion which he believes to have come from Heaven.

There is one danger, however, at a period like the present, when we are aiming to send Christianity to a distance, which demands attention. It is the danger of neglecting the best methods of propagating Christianity, of overlooking much plainer obligations than that of converting Heathens, of forgetting the claims of our religion at home and by our firesides. It happens, that on this, as on almost every subject, our most important duties are quiet, retired, noiseless, attracting little notice, and administering little powerful excitement to the imagination. The surest efforts for extending Christianity are those which few observe, which are recorded in no magazine, blazoned at no anniversaries, immortalized by no eloquence. Such efforts, being enjoined only by conscience and God, and requiring steady, patient, unwearyed toil, we are apt to overlook, and perhaps never more so than when the times furnish a popular substitute for them, and when we can discharge our consciences by labors, which, demanding little self-denial, are yet talked of as the highest exploits of christian charity. Hence it is, that when most is said of labors to propagate Christianity, the least may be really and effectually done. We hear a torrent roaring, and imagine that the fields are plentifully watered, when the torrent owes its violence to a ruinous concentration of streams,

which before moved quietly in a thousand little channels, moistening the hidden roots, and publishing their course, not to the ear, but to the eye, by the refreshing verdure which grew up around them. It is proper then, when new methods are struck out for sending Christianity abroad, to remind men often of the old-fashioned methods of promoting it; to insist on the superiority of the means, which are in almost every man's reach, which require no extensive associations, and which do not subject us to the temptations of exaggerated praise. We do not mean that any exertion, which promises to extend our religion in any tolerable state of purity, is to be declined. But the first rank is to be given to the efforts which God has made the plain duties of men in all ranks and conditions of life. Two of these methods will be briefly mentioned.

First, every individual should feel, that whilst his influence over other men's hearts and character, is very bounded, his power over his own heart is great and constant, and that his zeal for extending Christianity is to appear chiefly in extending it through his own mind and life. Let him remember that he as truly enlarges God's kingdom by invigorating his own moral and religious principles, as by communicating them to others. Our first concern is at home, our chief work is in our own breasts. It is idle to talk of our anxiety for other men's souls, if we neglect our own. Without personal virtue and religion, we cannot, even if we would, do much for the cause of Christ. It is only by purifying our own conceptions of God and duty, that we can give clear and useful views to others. We must first feel the power of religion, or we cannot recommend it with an unaffected and prevalent zeal. Would we then promote pure Christianity? Let us see that it be planted and

take root in our own minds, and that no busy concern for others take us from the labor of self-inspection, and the retired and silent offices of piety.

The second method is intimately connected with the first. It is example. This is a means within the reach of all. Be our station in life what it may, it has duties, in performing which faithfully, we give important aid to the cause of morality and piety. The efficacy of this means of advancing Christianity cannot be easily calculated. Example has an insinuating power, transforming the observer without noise, attracting him without the appearance of effort. A truly christian life is better than large contributions of wealth for the propagation of Christianity. The most prominent instruction of Jesus on this point, is, that we must let men 'see our good works,' if we would lead them to 'glorify our Father in heaven.' Let men see in us, that religion is something real, something more than high sounding and empty words, a restraint from sin, a bulwark against temptation, a spring of upright and useful action; let them see it not an idle form, nor a transient feeling, but our companion through life, infusing its purity into our common pursuits, following us to our homes, setting a guard round our integrity in the resorts of business, sweetening our tempers in seasons of provocation, disposing us habitually to sympathy with others, to patience and cheerfulness under our own afflictions, to candid judgment, and to sacrifices for others good; and we may hope that our light will not shine uselessly, that some slumbering conscience will be roused by this testimony to the excellence and practicableness of religion, that some worldly professor of Christianity will learn his obligations and blush for his criminal inconsistency, and that some, in whom the ~~good~~ arguments for our religion may

have failed to work a full belief, will be brought to the knowledge of the truth, by this plain practical proof of the heavenly nature of Christianity. Every man is surrounded with beings, who are moulded more or less by the principles of sympathy and imitation; and this social part of our nature he is bound to press into the service of Christianity.

It will not be supposed from these remarks on the duty of aiding Christianity by our example, that religion is to be worn ostentatiously, and that the Christian is studiously to exhibit himself and his good works for imitation. That same book which enjoins us to be patterns, tells us to avoid parade, and even to prefer entire secrecy in our charities and our prayers. Nothing destroys the weight of example so much as labor to make it striking and observed. Goodness, to be interesting, must be humble, modest, unassuming, not fond of show, not waiting for great and conspicuous occasions, but disclosing itself without labor and without design, in pious and benevolent offices; so simple, so minute, so steady, so habitual, that they will carry a conviction of the singleness and purity of the heart from which they proceed. Such goodness is never lost. It glorifies itself by the very humility which encircles it, just as the lights of heaven often break with peculiar splendor through the cloud which threatened to obscure them.

A pure example, which is found to be more consistent in proportion as it is more known, is the best method of preaching and extending Christianity. Without it, zeal for converting men brings reproach on the cause. A bad man, or a man of only ordinary goodness, who puts himself forward in this work, throws a suspiciousness over the efforts of better men, and thus the world come to set down all labor for spreading Christi-

anity as mere pretence. Let not him who will not submit to the toil of making himself better, become a reformer at home or abroad. Let not him who is known to be mean, or dishonest, or intriguing, or censorious, or unkind in his neighbourhood, talk of his concern for other men's souls. His life is an injury to religion, which his contributions of zeal, or even of wealth, cannot repair, and its injuriousness is aggravated by these very attempts to expiate its guilt, to reconcile him to himself.

It is well known, that the greatest obstruction to Christianity in heathen countries, is the palpable and undeniable depravity of christian nations. They abhor our religion, because we are such unhappy specimens of it. They are unable to read our books, but they can read our lives ; and what wonder, if they reject with scorn a system under which the vices seem to have flourished so luxuriantly. The Indian of both hemispheres has reason to set down the Christian as little better than himself. He associates with the name, perfidy, fraud, rapacity, and slaughter. Can we wonder that he is unwilling to receive a religion from the hand which has chained or robbed him ? Thus bad example is the great obstruction to Christianity, abroad as well as at home ; and perhaps little good is to be done abroad, until we become better at home, until real Christians understand and practise their religion more thoroughly, and by their example and influence spread it among their neighbours and through their country, so that the aspect of christian nations shall be less shocking and repulsive to the Jew, Mahometan, and Pagan. Our first labor should be upon ourselves ; and indeed if our religion be incapable of bearing more fruit among ourselves, it hardly seems to deserve a very burning zeal for its propagation. The question is an important one ; Would much be gained to

heathen countries, were we to make them precisely what nations called christian now are? That the change would be beneficial, we grant; but how many dark stains would remain on their characters. They would continue to fight and shed blood as they now do, to resent injuries hotly, to worship present gain and distinction, and to pursue the common business of life on the principles of undisguised selfishness; and they would learn one lesson of iniquity which they have not yet acquired, and that is, to condemn and revile their brethren, who should happen to view the most perplexed points of theology differently from themselves. The truth is, christian nations want a genuine reformation, one worthy of the name. They need to have their zeal directed, not so much to the spreading of the gospel abroad, as to the application of its plain precepts to their daily business, to the education of their children, to the treatment of their domestics and dependants, and to their social and religious intercourse. They need to understand, that a man's piety is to be estimated, not so much by his professions or direct religious exercises, as by a conscientious surrender of his will, passions, worldly interests, and prejudices, to the acknowledged duties of Christianity, and especially by a philanthropy resembling in its great features of mildness, activity, and endurance, that of Jesus Christ. They need to give up their severe inquisition into their neighbours' opinions, and to begin in earnest to seek for themselves, and to communicate to others a nobler standard of temper and practice, than they have yet derived from the scriptures. In a word, they need to learn the real value and design of Christianity by the only thorough and effectual process; that is, by drinking deeply into its spirit of love to God and man. If, in this age of societies, we should think it

wise to recommend another institution for the propagation of Christianity, it would be one, the members of which should be pledged to assist and animate one another in living according to the Sermon on the Mount. How far such a measure would be effectual, we venture not to predict ; but of one thing we are sure, that should it prosper, it would do more for spreading the gospel, than all other associations which are now receiving the patronage of the christian world.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO SOCIETY.

FEW men suspect, perhaps no man comprehends, the extent of the support given by religion to the virtues of ordinary life. No man perhaps is aware, how much our moral and social sentiments are fed from this fountain ; how powerless conscience would become without the belief of a God ; how palsied would be human benevolence, were there not the sense of a higher benevolence to quicken and sustain it ; how suddenly the whole social fabric would quake, and with what a fearful crash it would sink into hopeless ruins, were the ideas of a Supreme Being, of accountableness, and of a future life, to be utterly erased from every mind. Once let men thoroughly believe that they are the work and sport of chance ; that no superior intelligence concerus itself with human affairs ; that all their improvements perish forever at death ; that the weak have no guardian, and the injured no avenger ; that there is no recompense for sa-

crifces to uprightness and the public good ; that an oath is unheard in heaven ; that secret crimes have no witness but the perpetrator ; that human existence has no purpose, and human virtue no unfailing friend ; that this brief life is everything to us, and death is total, everlasting extinction ; once let men thoroughly abandon religion, and who can conceive or describe the extent of the desolation which would follow ? We hope perhaps that human laws and natural sympathy would hold society together. As reasonably might we believe, that were the sun quenched in the heavens, our torches could illuminate, and our fires quicken and fertilize the earth. What is there in human nature to awaken respect and tenderness, if man is the unprotected insect of a day ? and what is he more, if atheism be true ? Erase all thought and fear of God from a community, and selfishness and sensuality would absorb the whole man. Appetite, knowing no restraint, and poverty and suffering, having no solace or hope, would trample in scorn on the restraints of human laws. Virtue, duty, principle, would be mocked and spurned as unmeaning sounds. A sordid self-interest would supplant every other feeling, and man would become in fact, what the theory of atheism declares him to be, a companion for brutes.

It particularly deserves attention in this discussion, that the christian religion is singularly important to free communities. In truth we may doubt whether civil freedom can subsist without it. This at least we know, that equal rights and an impartial administration of justice, have never been enjoyed where this religion has not been understood. It favors free institutions, first, because its spirit is the very spirit of liberty ; that is, a spirit of respect for the interests and rights of others. Christianity recognises the essential equality of man-

kind ; beats down with its whole might those aspiring and rapacious principles of our nature, which have subjected the many to the few ; and, by its refining influence, as well as by direct precept, turns to God, and to Him only, that supreme homage which has been so impiously lavished on crowned and titled fellow creatures. Thus its whole tendency is free. It lays deeply the only foundations of liberty, which are the principles of benevolence, justice, and respect for human nature. The spirit of liberty is not merely, as multitudes imagine, a jealousy of our own particular rights, an unwillingness to be oppressed ourselves, but a respect for the rights of others, and an unwillingness that any man, whether high or low, should be wronged, and trampled under foot. Now this is the spirit of Christianity ; and liberty has no security, any farther than this uprightness and benevolence of sentiment actuates a community.

In another method religion befriends liberty. It diminishes the necessity of public restraints, and supersedes in a great degree the use of force in administering the laws ; and this it does, by making men a law to themselves, and by repressing the disposition to disturb and injure society. Take away the purifying and restraining influence of religion, and selfishness, rapacity, and injustice will break out in new excesses ; and amidst the increasing perils of society, government must be strengthened to defend it, must accumulate means of repressing disorder and crime ; and this strength and these means may be, and often have been, turned against the freedom of the state which they were meant to secure. Diminish principle, and you increase the need of force in a community. In this country, government needs not the array of power which you meet in other

nations,—no guards of soldiers, no hosts of spies, no vexatious regulations of police ; but accomplishes its beneficent purposes by a few unarmed judges and civil officers, and operates so silently around us, that comes so seldom in contact with us, that many of us enjoy its blessings with hardly a thought of its existence. This is the perfection of freedom ; and to what do we owe this condition ? I answer, to the power of those laws which Religion writes on our hearts, which unite and concentrate public opinion against injustice and oppression, which spread a spirit of equity and good will through the community. Thus religion is the soul of freedom, and no nation under heaven has such an interest in it as ourselves.

MEMOIR OF JOHN GALLISON, ESQ.

First published in 1821.

OUR last number contained a brief notice of Mr. Gallison ; but his rare excellence, and the singular affection, esteem, and confidence which he enjoyed, have been thought to demand a more particular delineation of his character. And the office is too grateful to be declined. In the present imperfect condition of human nature, when strange and mournful inconsistencies so often mix with and shade the virtues of good men ; when Truth, that stern monitor, almost continually forbids us to give free scope to admiration, and compels us to dispense our praise with a measured and timid liberality ; it is delightful to meet an example of high endowments, undebased by the mixture of unworthy habits and feel-

ings ; to meet a character whose blamelessness spares us the pain of making deductions from its virtues. And our satisfaction is greatly increased, when Providence has seen fit to unfold this character in the open light of a conspicuous station, so that many around us have had opportunity to observe it as well as ourselves, and we can give utterance to our affection and respect, with the confidence of finding sympathy and a full response in the hearts of our readers.

But we have a higher motive, than the relief and gratification of personal feelings, for paying this tribute to Mr. Gallison. We consider his character as singularly instructive, particularly to that important class of the community, young men. His life, whilst it bore strong testimony to those great principles of morality and religion, in which all ranks and ages have an interest, and on which society rests, seems to us peculiarly valuable, as a commentary on the capacities and right application of youth ; as demonstrating what a young man may become, what honor, love, and influence he may gather round him, and how attractive are the christian virtues at that age which is generally considered as least amenable to the laws of religion. For young men we chiefly make this record ; and we do it with a deep conviction, that society cannot be served more effectually than by spreading through this class a purer morality, and a deeper sense of responsibility than are now enforced by public opinion ; for our young men are soon to be the fathers, guides, and defenders of the community ; and however examples may now and then occur of early profligacy changed by time into purity and virtue, yet too often the harvest answers to the seed, the building to the foundation ; and perhaps it will appear on that great day which is to unfold the consequences of actions, that even

forsaken vice leaves wounds in the mind, which are slowly healed, and which injure the moral powers, and predispose to moral disease, through the whole life.

In this connexion it may be proper to observe, that there is no country, in which society has such an interest in bringing strong moral and religious influences to bear on young men, as in this ; for our country has been distinguished by the premature growth of those to whom it gives birth. Various circumstances here develope the mind and active powers earlier than in Europe. Our young men come forward sooner into life ; mix sooner in the stir and conflicts of business and politics ; and form sooner the most important domestic relations. It has often been suggested, that the mind suffers under this forcing system, that it is exhausted by excess of action, that a slower growth would give it greater strength and expansion. But be this true or not (and we trust that the suggestion is founded on remote analogies rather than on observation), one thing is plain, that in proportion as the young advance rapidly in intellect and activity, there should be a powerful application of moral and religious truths and sanctions to their consciences and hearts. Their whole nature should grow at once. The moral sense, the sense of God, should not slumber, whilst the intellect and the passions are awake and enlarging themselves with a fearful energy. A conviction of their responsibility to God and society should be deeply wrought into the opening reason, so as to recur through life ~~with~~ the force of instinct. Mr. Gallison was a striking example of the early and harmonious unfolding of the moral and intellectual nature, and in this view his character is particularly fitted to the wants and dangers of our state of society.

When we know or hear of uncommon excellence, it is natural to inquire, by what propitious circumstances it was formed ; and hence the curiosity which has sifted so diligently the early history of eminent men. But such investigations, we believe, generally teach us, that character is more independent on outward circumstances than is usually thought, that the chief causes which form a superior mind are within itself. Whilst the Supreme Being encourages liberally the labors of education by connecting with them many good and almost sure results, still, as if to magnify his own power and to teach men humility and dependence, he often produces, with few or no means, a strength of intellect and principle, a grace and dignity of character, which the most anxious human culture cannot confer. In the early years of Mr. Gallison, we find no striking circumstances or incidents which determined the peculiarities of his future character. The processes, by which he became what he was, were inward ; and the only voice, which could disclose them, is now silent in death.

He was born in Marblehead, October, 1788. His mother, a sister of the late Chief Justice Sewall, survived his birth but a few hours ; and his life began with one of the heaviest of life's afflictions, the loss of a mother's love. He was so happy however as to be the object of singular and never failing kindness to his surviving parent, whom he requited with no common filial attachment ; and he may be cited as a proof of the good effects of that more unrestrained and tender intercourse between parents and children, which distinguishes the present from the past age. He was early placed under the tuition of the Rev. Dr. Harris, now President of Columbia College New York, then preceptor of an

academy, and rector of an Episcopal church, in Marblehead. He is said to have endeared himself to his revered instructor by his docility, industry, modesty, love of truth, and steady improvement. He held a high but unenvied rank at school; and it may be mentioned as an evidence of early judgment and a constant mind, that some of the friendships of that early period went with him to the grave, and were among the best enjoyments of his life.

He entered the University at Cambridge, A. D. 1803, in the fifteenth year of his age; and whilst his unremitting application gave him the full benefit of its various provisions for literary improvement, his consistent character and social virtues won for him universal confidence and esteem. On leaving the University he commenced the study of the law under the Hon. John Quincy Adams, and having completed his preparation under the Hon. Joseph Story, began the practice of his profession at Marblehead, A. D. 1810. By the advice of his friends he soon removed to this metropolis, a more proper, because wider sphere of action. Here he experienced, for a time, those anxieties and depressions, which form the common trial of young men, who enter a crowded profession. But his prospects were brightened by a connexion in business, which he formed with the Hon. William Prescott, and which, as it was unsolicited and attended by other flattering circumstances, gave him a gratifying assurance of the confidence which he had inspired. The progress of his reputation as a lawyer was soon a matter of common remark; and those, who were most capable of understanding the depth and extent of his legal attainments, were confident, that should his life be spared, he would attain the highest honors of his profession.

He died December, 1820, at the age of 32. The shock given to the community by this event was unusual, and the calamity was heightened by its unexpectedness. His general health, cheerfulness, and activity had given the promise of a long life, and his friends were not alarmed for him until a week before his death. His disease was an inflammation of the brain, which first discovered itself in slight aberrations of mind, and terminated in delirium. This awful eclipse of reason continued to the last, so that his friends were denied the satisfaction of receiving from his dying lips assurances of his christian hope. Some of them however recollect with pleasure, that at the beginning of his disease, when his intellect was rather exalted than deranged, his expressions of religious feeling and joy were unusually strong ; and he has left them higher consolation than a dying testimony, even the memory of a blameless and well spent life.

Having given this brief record of a life too peaceful and prosperous to furnish matter for biography, we proceed to give our views of the character of Mr. Gallison. —His chief distinction was not talent, although he had fine powers of intellect, and a capacity of attention, which, in usefulness if not in splendor, generally surpasses genius. His primary characteristic, and that which gave him his peculiar weight in the community, was the force of moral and religious principle ; a force, which operated with the steadiness of a law of nature, a paramount energy which suffered no portion of life or intellect to be wasted, which concentrated all his faculties and feelings on worthy objects. His powers did not astonish, but none of them were lost to himself or society. His great distinction was the singleness of his mind, the sway which duty had gained over him,

his habit of submitting to this as to an inviolable ordinance of the universe. Conscience was consulted reverently as an oracle of God. The moral power seemed always at work in his breast, and its control reached to his whole life.

We sometimes witness a strong regard to duty, which confers little grace or interest on the character, because partial and exclusive views are taken of duty, and God is thought to require a narrow service, which chains and contracts instead of unfolding the mind. In Mr. Gallison, the sense of duty was as enlightened and enlarged, as it was strong. To live religiously, he did not think himself called to give up the proper pursuits and gratifications of human nature. He believed, that religion was in harmony with intellectual improvement, with the pleasures of imagination and society, and especially with the kind affections. His views of the true excellence of a human being were large and generous ; and hence, instead of that contracted and repulsive character, which has often been identified with piety, his virtue, though of adamantine firmness, was attractive, cheerful, lovely.

This union of strength and light, in his sense of duty, gave a singular harmony to his character. All his faculties and sensibilities seemed to unfold together, just as the whole body grows at once ; and all were preserved, by a wise presiding moral sentiment, in their just proportions. He was remarkably free from excess, even in the virtues and pursuits to which he was most prone. His well balanced mind was the admiration of his friends. He had strong feeling, yet a calm judgment ; and unwearyed activity without restlessness or precipitancy. He had vigor and freedom of thought, but not the slightest propensity to rash and wild speculation. He had professional ardor, but did not sacrifice

to his profession the general improvement of his intellect, and heart. He loved study, and equally loved society. He had religious sensibility, but a sensibility which never rested, until it had found its true perfection and manifestation in practice. His mind was singularly harmonious, a well adjusted whole ; and this was the secret of the signal confidence which he inspired ; for confidence, or the repose of our minds on another, depends on nothing so much as on the proportion which we observe in his character. Even a good feeling, when carried to excess, though viewed with indulgence and affection, always shakes in a measure our trust.

From this general survey, we pass to some particulars of the character of Mr. Gallison. His religion was a trait which claims our first consideration. He believed in God, and in the revelation of his will by Jesus Christ ; and he was not a man in whom such a belief could lie dead. That great and almost overwhelming doctrine of a God, the Maker of all things, in whom he lived, and from whom all his blessings came, wrought in him powerfully. He was not satisfied with a superficial religion, but was particularly interested in those instructions from the pulpit which enjoined a deep, living, all-pervading sense of God's presence and authority, and an intimate union of the mind with its Creator. A friend, who knew him intimately, observes ;—‘ In our frequent walks, his conversation so naturally and cheerfully turned on the attributes and dispensations of God, as convinced me that his religion was no less the delight of his heart, than the guide of his life. Though habitually temperate in his feelings, I have sometimes known him kindle into rapture while conversing on these holy themes.’

But his religion, though strong and earnest, was in unison with his whole character, calm, inquisitive, ra-

tional. Uninfected by bigotry or fanaticism, and unsewed by the fair promises of the spirit of innovation, he formed his views of the christian system with caution, and held them without asperity. In regard to that important doctrine which has lately agitated the community, he was a Unitarian, believing in the pre-existence of the Saviour, and as firmly believing that he was a distinct being from the Supreme God, derived from and dependent on him; and he considered the Gospel of John, which is often esteemed as the strong hold of opposite sentiments, as giving peculiar support to these views. We mention this, not because the conclusions of so wise and good a man were necessarily true, but because reproach is often thrown on the opinions which he adopted, as wanting power to purify and save. He may have erred, for he was a man; but who that knew him can doubt that, whatever were his errors, he held the most important and efficacious doctrines of Christianity? His religious friends, and they were not a few, can testify to the seriousness and reverence with which he approached the scriptures, and to the fidelity with which he availed himself of the means of a right interpretation.

His religion was not ostentatiously thrust on notice; but he thought as little of hiding it, as of concealing his social feelings, or his love of knowledge. It was the light by which he walked, and his daily path showed whence the light came. Of his decision in asserting the principles of that religion which he received as from God, he gave a striking proof in his address to the Peace Society of this Commonwealth, which breathes the very morality of Christ, and is throughout a mild but firm remonstrance against great practical errors, which have corrupted the church almost as deeply as

the world. It was so natural to him to act on the convictions of his mind, that he seemed on this occasion utterly unconscious, that there was a degree of heroism in a young man of a secular calling, and who mixed occasionally in fashionable life, enlisting so earnestly in the service of the most neglected, yet most distinguishing virtues of Christianity.

That a man, to whom Christianity was so authoritative, should be characterised by its chief grace, benevolence, we cannot wonder. Nature formed him for the kind affections, and religious principle added tenderness, steadiness, dignity, to the impulses of nature. That great maxim of Christianity, ‘No man liveth to himself,’ was engraven on his mind. Without profession, or show, or any striking discoveries of emotion, he felt the claim of everything human on his sympathy and service. His youth and professional engagements did not absolve him to his own conscience from laboring in the cause of mankind ; and his steady zeal redeemed from business sufficient time for doing extensive good. In the institutions for useful objects, with which he connected himself, he gave more than his property ; he contributed his mind, his judgment, his well directed zeal ; and the object which he was found to favor, derived advantage from his sanction, no less than from his labors.

He felt strongly, what a just view of human nature always teaches, that society is served by nothing so essentially, as by the infusion of a moral and religious spirit into all its classes ; and this principle, like every other when once recognised, became to him a law. We cannot but mention with great pleasure the earnestness with which he entered into a plan for collecting the poor children, in the neighbourhood of the church

where he worshipped, into a school for religious instruction on the Lord's-day. He visited many poor families on this errand of charity, offering at once christian instruction, and the pecuniary means by which the children might be clothed decently to receive it; and he gave a part of every Sunday to this office. The friend, whom we formerly quoted, observes, 'I was much delighted to see him one Sunday, leading one of his little flock, (who being a stranger had not become familiarized to his home) through our dirtiest lanes, and inquiring at the humblest sheds for his dwelling.' To a man, crowded with business, and accustomed to the most refined society, this lowly and unostentatious mode of charity could only have been recommended by a supreme sense of religious and social obligation. He was one of the few among us, who saw that the initiation of the poor into moral and religious truth, was an office worthy of the most cultivated understanding, and that to leave it, as it is sometimes left, to those whose zeal outstrips their knowledge, was to expose to hazard and reproach one of the most powerful means of benefiting society.

Another cause to which he devoted himself was the Peace Society of this Commonwealth, and to this institution his mind was drawn and bound by perceiving its accordance with the spirit of Christianity. Accustomed as he was to believe that every principle which a man adopts is to be carried into life, he was shocked with the repugnance between the christian code and the practice of its professed followers on the subject of war; and he believed that Christianity, seconded as it is by the progress of society, was a power adequate to the production of a great revolution of opinion on this point, if its plain principles and the plain interests of men were earnestly unfolded. There was one part of this extensive topic,

to which his mind particularly turned. He believed that society had made sufficient advances, to warrant the attempt to expunge from the usages of war the right of capturing private property at sea. He believed that the evils of war would be greatly abridged, and its recurrence checked, were the ocean to be made a safe, privileged, unmolested pathway for all nations, whether in war or peace ; and that the minds of men had become prepared for this change, by the respect now paid by belligerents to private property on shore, a mitigation of war to be wholly ascribed to the progress of the principles and spirit of Christianity. His interest in this subject led him to study the history of maritime warfare, and probably no man among us had acquired a more extensive acquaintance with it. Some of the results he gave in an article in the North American Review, on Privateering, and in a Memorial to Congress against this remnant of barbarism. To this field of labor he certainly was not drawn by the hope of popularity ; and though he outstripped the feelings of the community, his efforts will not be vain. He was a pioneer in a path, in which society, if it continue to advance, will certainly follow him, and will at length do justice to the wisdom as well as purity of his design.

Other institutions shared his zeal and countenance ; but we pass from these to observe, that his benevolence was not husbanded for public works or great occasions. It entered into the very frame and structure of his mind, so that, wherever he acted, he left its evidences and fruits. Even in those employments, where a man is expected to propose distinctly his own interest, he looked beyond himself ; and those who paid him for his services, felt that another debt was due, and personal attachment often sprung from the intercourse of business. In his

social and domestic connexions, how he felt and lived, and what spirit he breathed, we learn from the countenances and tones of his friends, when they speak of his loss. The kind of praise which a man receives after death corresponds generally with precision to his character. We can often see on the decease of a distinguished individual, that whilst all praise, few feel; that the heart has no burden, no oppression. In the case of Mr. Gallison, there was a general, spontaneous conviction that society had been bereaved; and at the same time, a feeling of personal bereavement, as if a void which no other could fill, were made in every circle in which he familiarly moved; and this can only be explained by the genuine benevolence, the sympathy with every human interest, which formed his character. His benevolence indeed was singularly unalloyed. Those feelings of unkindness which sometimes obscure, for a moment, the goodness of excellent men, seldom or never passed over him. Those who best knew him, cannot, by an effort of imagination, put an acrimonious speech into his lips, any more than they can think of him under an entirely different countenance. The voice ceases to be his, its tones do not belong to him, when they would make it the vehicle of unkindness. We have understood, what we should not doubt, that in his profession, amidst the collision of rivals, his ambition, which undoubtedly degenerated sometimes into excess, was still so controlled by his generosity and uprightness, that he was never known to sully with an envious breath, the honest fame of another, or to withhold a ready testimony to another's worth. So great was the kindness of his heart, that his many pressing employments did not exclude those little attentions to his kindred, for which multiplied cares are generally admitted as an excuse.

He made leisure for minute as well as important services, and thus it is that a feeling of tenderness as well as of respect, is spread through the whole circle of his relatives.

In regard to his intellectual powers, they derived their superiority not only from the liberality of nature, but from the conscientiousness with which they were improved. He early felt the importance of a generous and extensive culture of the mind, and systematically connected with professional studies the pursuit of general literature. He was a striking example of the influence of an operative and enlightened moral sense over the intellect. His views were distinguished not so much by boldness and excusiveness as by clearness, steadiness, judiciousness, and truth; and these characteristic properties of his understanding derived their strength, if not existence, from that fairness, rectitude, simplicity, and that love of the true and useful, which entered so largely into his moral constitution. The objects on which he thought and wrote did not offer themselves to him in the bright hues of inspired imagination, but in the forms, dimensions, and colors of reality; and yet there was no tameness in his conception, for the moral relations of things, the most sublime of all relations, he traced with eagerness and delighted to unfold. Accordingly in all his writings we perceive the marks of an understanding surrounded by a clear and warm moral atmosphere. His intellect, we repeat it, was excited and developed very much by moral and religious principle. It was not naturally creative, restless, stirred by a bright and burning imagination. The strong power within was conscience, enlightened and exalted by religion; and this sent life through the intellect, and

conferred or heightened the qualities by which it was distinguished.

Of his professional character we know nothing by personal observation ; but we do know, that in a metropolis where the standard of professional talent and purity is high, he was eminent. We have understood, that he was at once a scientific and practical lawyer, uniting comprehensive views of jurisprudence, and laborious research into general principles, with a singular accuracy, and most conscientious fidelity, in investigating the details of the causes in which he was engaged. The spontaneous tribute of the members of the Suffolk Bar to so young a brother, is perhaps without precedent. It deserves to be mentioned among his claims to esteem, that he was not usurped by a profession to which he was so devoted ; that his thirst for legal knowledge and distinction, though so ardent, left him free for such a variety of exertions and acquisitions.

Of his industry, we have had occasion frequently to speak, and it was not the least striking trait in his character. We need no other proof of this, than his early eminence in a profession, which offers no prizes to genius unaccompanied by application, and whose treasures are locked up in books, which hold out no lures to imagination or taste, and which can only interest a mind disposed to patient and intense exertion. We recur, however, to his industry, not so much because it distinguished him, as from the desire of removing what seems to us a false impression, that he fell a victim to excessive application. That he was occasionally guilty of intemperate study (a crime in the eye of a refined morality, because it sacrifices future and extensive usefulness to immediate acquisition), is probably true ; but less

guilty, we apprehend, than many who are not charged with excess. His social nature, his love of general literature, and his regular use of exercise, gave as great and frequent relaxation to his mind, as studious men generally think necessary ; nor ought his example to lose its power, by the apprehension, that to follow his steps will be to descend with him to an early grave.

This excellent man it has pleased God to take from us ; and to take without warning, when our hope was firmest, and his prospects of usefulness and prosperity were to human eyes, unclouded. That such a course should be so short, is the general sorrow. But ought we to think it short ? In the best sense his life was long. To be the centre of so many influences ; to awaken through so large a circle sentiments of affection and esteem ; to bear effectual testimony to the reality of religion ; to exalt the standard of youthful character to adorn a profession, to which the administration of public justice, and the care of our civil institutions are peculiarly confided ; to uphold and strengthen useful associations ; to be the friend of the poor and ignorant, and a model for the rich and improved ; to live in the hearts of friends, and to die amidst general, deep, unaffected lamentation ; these surely are not evidences of a brief existence. ‘ Honorable age is not that, which standeth in length of time, nor which is measured by number of years ; but wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.’

Still the question may be asked, ‘ Why was he taken from so much usefulness ?’ Were that state laid open to us, into which he is removed, we should have an answer. We should see, that this world is not the only one where intellect is unfolded, and the heart and active powers find objects. We might see, that such a

spirit as his, was needed now in another and nobler province of the creation ; and that all God's providence towards him had been training and fitting him to be born, if we may so speak, at this very time, into the future world, there to perform offices and receive blessings which only a mind so framed and gifted could sustain and enjoy. He is not lost. Jesus, whom he followed, 'hath abolished death.' Thought, affection, piety, usefulness, do not die. If they did, we should do well to hang his tomb with sackcloth, or rather to obliterate every trace and recollection of his tomb and his name, for then a light, more precious than the sun's, is quenched forever. But he is not lost, nor is he exiled from his true happiness. An enlightened, just and good mind, is a citizen of the universe, and has faculties and affections which correspond to all God's works. Why would we limit it to earth, perhaps the lowest world in this immense creation? Why shall not the spirit, which has given proof of its divine origin and heavenly tendency, be suffered to rise to its proper abode, to a holier community, to a vision of God, under which earthly and mortal natures would sink and be dissolved?

One benefit of the early removal of such a man as Mr. Gallison, is obvious. We learn from it, how early in life the great work of life may begin, and how successfully be prosecuted. Had he lived to advanced years, the acquisitions of his youth would have been forgotten and lost in those of riper years. His character would have been an invaluable legacy, but chiefly to the mature and aged. And surely if his early death shall exalt the aims and purposes of the young ; if piety, now postponed to later years, to a winter which bears no such fruit, shall be esteemed the ornament and de-

fence of that interesting and tempted age ; if our young men shall learn from him that they belong to God and society ; then his early death may prove as useful as a protracted life.

We shall add but one more remark. The general sorrow which followed Mr. Gallison to the tomb, was not only honorable to him, but to the community. For he had no dazzling qualities. His manners were not imposing, nor was he aided by uncommon patronage. His worth was unobtrusive, mild, retiring, and left to win its own way to notice and honor. Yet how few young men have reared such a monument in the memories and hearts of the community ? Amidst charges of degeneracy, and with real grounds of humiliation, we should deem it a privilege to live in a state of society, in which such a character as Mr. Gallison's is so generally understood, and is recompensed with such heartfelt and generous praise.



APPENDIX.

[I HAVE thrown into an Appendix parts of certain Tracts and Discourses, which were called forth by passing events in the political and religious world. I have aimed, in making the selections, to take passages, which contain general views, retaining only such references to personal, local, and temporary topics, as seem necessary to a full understanding of the extracts.]

EXTRACTS FROM OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROPOSITION FOR INCREASING THE MEANS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY IN CAMBRIDGE. 1816.

As a proposition is now before the public for increasing the means of theological education at Harvard University, it is thought that a few observations on the subject may be acceptable to those who have not been able to give to it much attention, and whose aid and patronage may be solicited.

It may perhaps be asked by some, though I hope the question will be confined to a few, Why ought we to be so solicitous for the education of ministers? The answer is obvious. The object of the ministry is peculiarly important. To the christian minister are intrusted in a measure the dearest and most valuable interests of the human race. He is called to watch over the morals of society, and to awaken and cultivate the principles of piety and virtue in the hearts of individuals. He is set apart to dispense that religion, which, as we believe, came from God, which was given to reform, exalt, and console us, and on the reception of which the happiness of the future life depends. Ought we not to be solicitous for the wise and effectual training of those, by whom this religion is to be unfolded and enforced, and to whose influence our own minds and those of our children are to be so often exposed?

Our interest in a minister is very peculiar. He is to us what no other professional man can be. We want him, not to transact our

business and to receive a compensation, but to be our friend, our guide, an inmate in our families ; to enter our houses in affliction ; and to be able to give us light, admonition, and consolation in suffering, sickness, and the last hours of life.

Our connexion with men of other professions is transient, accidental, rare. With a minister it is habitual. Once in the week, at least, we are to meet him and sit under his instructions. We are to give up our minds in a measure to his influence, and to receive from him impressions on a subject, which more than all others concerns us, and with which our improvement and tranquillity through life and our future peace are intimately connected.

We want the minister of religion to address our understandings with clearness ; to extend and brighten our moral and religious conceptions ; to throw light over the obscurities of the sacred volume ; to assist us in repelling those doubts which sometimes shake our convictions of christian truth ; and to establish us in a firm and rational belief.

We want him, not only to address the understanding with clearness, but still more to speak to the conscience and heart with power; to force, as it were, our thoughts from the world; to rouse us from the slumbers of an unreflecting life; to exhibit religion in an interesting form, and to engage our affections on the side of duty. Such are the offices and aids which we need from the christian minister. Who does not see in a moment, that much preparation of the intellect and heart is required to render him successful in these high and generous labors ?

These reasons for being interested in the education of ministers grow out of the nature and importance of religion. Another important remark is, that the state of our country demands that greater care than ever should be given to this object. It will not be denied, I presume, that this country is on the whole advancing in intelligence. The means of improvement are more liberally and more generally afforded to the young than in former times. A closer connexion subsists with the cultivated minds in other countries. A variety of institutions are awakening our powers, and communicating a degree of general knowledge, which was not formerly diffused among us. Taste is more extensively cultivated, and the finest productions of polite literature find their way into many of our families. Now in this state of things, in this increasing activity of intellect, there is peculiar need of an enlightened ministry. Religion should not be left to feeble and ignorant advocates, to men of narrow and unfurnished minds. Its ministers should

be practical proofs, that it may be connected with the noblest improvements of the understanding ; and they should be able to convert into weapons for its defence, the discoveries of philosophy, and the speculations of genius. Religion must be adapted in its mode of exhibition to the state of society. The form in which we present it to the infant will not satisfy and interest the advanced understanding. In the same manner, if in a cultivated age religious instruction does not partake the general elevation, it will be slighted by the very minds whose influence it is most desirable to engage on the side of virtue and piety.

I have observed, that an enlightened age requires an enlightened ministry. On the other hand it may be observed, that an enlightened ministry is a powerful agent in continuing and accelerating the progress of light, of refinement, and of all social improvements. The limits of this essay will not admit the full developement of this sentiment. I will only observe, that perhaps the most reflecting men are not aware how far a society is indebted for activity of intellect, delicacy of manners, and the strength of all its institutions, to the silent, subtle influence of the thoughts and feelings which are kept alive in the breasts of multitudes by religious instruction.

There is another most important consideration for promoting an enlightened ministry. Religious teachers there certainly will be, of one description or another ; and if men of well furnished minds cannot be found for this office, we shall be overwhelmed by the ignorant and fanatical. The human heart is disposed, by its very nature, to religious impressions, and it wants guidance, wants direction, wants the light and fervor of other minds, in this most interesting concern. Conscious of weakness, and delighting in excitement, it will follow the blindest guide, who speaks with confidence of his communications with God, rather than advance alone in the religious life. An enlightened ministry is the only barrier against fanaticism. Remove this, and popular enthusiasts would sweep away the multitude as with a torrent, would operate with an unresisted power on the ardent imagination of youth, and on the devotional susceptibility of woman, and would even prostrate cultivated minds in which feeling is the most prominent trait. Few of us consider the proneness of the human heart to extravagance and fanaticism, or how much we are all indebted for our safety to the good sense and intellectual and religious improvement of ministers of religion.

Ignorant ministers are driven almost by necessity to fanaticism. Unable to interest their hearers by appeals to the understanding,

APPENDIX.

and by clear, judicious, and affecting delineations of religion, they can only acquire and maintain the ascendency which is so dear to them, by inflaming the passions, by exciting a distempered and ungoverned sensibility, and by perpetuating ignorance and error. Every man of observation must have seen melancholy illustrations of this truth, and what an argument does it afford in favor of an enlightened ministry !

Nothing more is needed to show the great interest which the community ought to feel in the education of young men for the ministry. But it will be asked, Are not our present means sufficient? Are not our pulpits filled with well furnished and enlightened teachers? Why seek to obtain additional aids for this important end? I answer, first, that a sufficient number of enlightened ministers is not trained for our pulpits. There is a demand beyond the supply, even if we look no further than this Commonwealth; and if we look through the whole country, we shall see an immense tract of the spiritual vineyard uncultivated, and uncultivated for want of laborers.—I answer, in the second place, that whilst in our pulpits we have ministers whose gifts and endowments entitle them to respect, we yet need and ought to possess a more enlightened ministry. Many of our religious teachers will lament to us the deficiencies of their education, will lament that the narrowness of their circumstances compelled them to too early an entrance on their work, will lament that they were deprived, by the imperfection of our institutions, of many aids which the preparation for the ministry requires. We have indeed many good ministers. But we ought to have better. We may have better. But unless we will sow more liberally, we cannot expect a richer harvest. The education of ministers decides very much their future character, and where this is incomplete, we must not expect to be blessed with powerful and impressive instruction. The sum is, we need an increase of the means of theological education.

But it will be asked, Why shall we advance funds for the education of ministers, rather than of physicians or lawyers? Why are such peculiar aids and encouragements needed for this profession? Will not the demand for ministers obtain a supply, just as the demand for every other species of talent? This reasoning is founded on a principle generally true, that demand creates a supply; but every general rule has its exceptions, and it is one of the highest offices of practical wisdom to discern the cases where the rule fails in its application.

All reasoning should give place to fact. Now it is an undeniable fact, that whilst the other learned professions in our country are crowded and overstocked, whilst the supply vastly surpasses the demand, the profession of the ministry is comparatively deserted, and candidates of respectable standing, instead of obtruding themselves in crowds, are often to be sought with a degree of care and difficulty.

The reason of this is to be found in the difference between the ministry and other professions. Other professions hold out the strong lures of profit and distinction. They appeal to the ambition, the love of gain, the desire of rising in the world, which are so operative on youthful minds. These lures are not, and ought not to be, exhibited by the ministry. This profession makes its chief appeal to the moral and religious feelings of the young, and we all know how much fainter these are than those which I have previously mentioned. Can we wonder then that the ministry is less crowded?

I proceed to another remark. The professions of law and medicine do not imperiously demand any high moral qualifications in those who embrace them. A young man, whose habits are not altogether pure, or whose character is marked by levity, may enter on the study of these professions, without incurring the reproach of impropriety or inconsistency of conduct. The ministry, on the other hand, demands not merely unexceptionable morals, but a seriousness of mind, and a propensity to contemplative and devout habits, which are not the ordinary characteristics of that age, when a choice must be made of the business of life. On this account the number of the young, who are inclined by their own feelings and advised by others to enter the ministry, is comparatively small.

I am now led to another reflection, growing out of the last. The profession of the ministry has an aspect not inviting to the young. Youth is the period of animation and gaiety. But to the hasty observation of youth, there is a gloominess, a solemnity, a painful self-restraint belonging to the life of a minister. Even young men of pure morals and of devotional susceptibility shrink from an employment, which they think will separate them from the world, and impose a rigorous discipline and painful circumspection. That path, which they would probably find most tranquil and most flowery, seems to them beset with thorns. Do we not see many obstructions to a sufficient supply of students of theology?

I now proceed to another most important consideration. We have seen, that a large number of young men, qualified by their

habits and feelings for the ministry, is not to be expected. It is also a fact, and a very decisive fact, that young men, thus qualified, generally belong to families, whose circumstances are confined, and whose means of educating their children are exceedingly narrow. From this class of society, the ministerial profession, as is well known, receives its largest supplies. Do we not at once discover from this statement, that this profession demands from the community peculiar encouragement?—Let me briefly repeat what I have said! From the nature of the ministry, but a small proportion of the young are disposed or fitted to enter it, and of this number a considerable part are unable to defray the expenses of their education; and yet the community has the highest possible interest in giving them the best education which the improvements of the age and the opulence of the country will admit. Is it not clear, that there ought to be provided liberal funds for this most valuable object?

Will it here be asked, Why the candidate for the ministry cannot borrow money to defray the charges of his education? I answer, it is not always easy for him to borrow. Besides, a debt is a most distressing incumbrance to a man, who has a prospect of a salary so small, that, without exertions foreign to his profession, it will hardly support him. Can we wonder that the profession is declined in preference to such a burden?

Where this burden, however, is chosen, the effect is unhappy, and the cause of religion is often a sufferer. The candidate, unwilling to contract a larger debt than is indispensable to his object, hurries through his studies, and enters unfurnished and unprepared on the ministry. His first care is, as it should be, to free himself from his pecuniary obligations; and for this end he endeavours to unite some secular employment with his sacred calling. In this way the spirit of study and of his profession is damped. He forms negligent habits in his preparation for the pulpit, which he soon thinks are justified by the wants of a growing family. His imperfect education therefore is never completed. His mind remains stationary. A meagre library, which he is unable to enlarge, furnishes the weekly food for his flock, who are forced to subsist on an uninteresting repetition of the same dull thoughts.

This is the melancholy history of too many who enter the ministry. Few young men among us are in fact sufficiently prepared, and the consequence is, that religious instruction is not what it should be. The community at large cannot perhaps understand how extensive a preparation the ministry requires. There is one idea, however, which should teach them, that it ought to be more extensive than

that which is demanded for any other profession. A lawyer and physician begin their employment with a small number of clients or patients, and their practice is confined to the least important cases within their respective departments. They have therefore much leisure for preparation after entering on their pursuits, and gradually rise into public notice. Not so the minister. He enters at once ~~on the~~ stage. All the duties of a parish immediately devolve upon him. His connexion at the first moment extends to as large a number as he will ever be called to serve. His station is at first conspicuous. He is literally burdened and pressed with duties. The mere labor of composing as many sermons as are demanded of him, is enough to exhaust his time and strength. If then his education has been deficient, how is it to be repaired? Amidst these disadvantages, can we wonder that the mind loses its spring, and soon becomes satisfied with very humble productions? How important is it, that a good foundation should be laid, that the theological student should have time to accumulate some intellectual treasures, and that he should be trained under circumstances most suited to give him ~~an~~ unconquerable love of his profession, of study, and of the cause to which he is devoted!

THE SYSTEM OF EXCLUSION AND DENUNCIATION IN RELIGION
CONSIDERED. 1815.

Nothing is plainer, than that the leaders of the party called 'Orthodox,' have adopted and mean to enforce a system of exclusion, in regard to Liberal Christians. They spare no pains to infect the minds of their too easy followers with the persuasion, that they ought to refuse communion with their Unitarian brethren, and to deny them the name, character, and privileges of Christians. On this system, I shall now offer several observations.

I begin with an important suggestion. I beg that it may be distinctly understood, that the zeal of Liberal Christians on this point has no other object, than the peace and prosperity of the church of Christ. We are pleading, not our own cause, but the cause of our Master. The denial of our christian character by fallible and imperfect men gives us no anxiety. Our relation to Jesus Christ is not to be dissolved by the breath of man. Our christian rights do not depend on human passions. We have precisely the same

power over our brethren, which they have over us, and are equally authorised to sever them from the body of Christ. Still more; if the possession of truth give superior weight to denunciation, we are persuaded that our opposers will be the severest sufferers, should we think fit to hurl back the sentence of exclusion and condemnation. But we have no disposition to usurp power over our brethren. We believe, that the spirit which is so studiously excited against ourselves, has done incalculable injury to the cause of Christ; and we pray God to deliver us from its power.

Why are the name, character, and rights of Christians to be denied to Unitarians? Do they deny that Jesus is the Christ? do they reject his word as the rule of their faith and practice? do their lives discover indifference to his authority and example? No, these are not their offences. They are deficient in none of the qualifications of disciples, which were required in the primitive age. Their offence is, that they read the scriptures for themselves, and derive from them different opinions on certain points, from those which others have adopted. Mistake of judgment is their pretended crime, and this crime is laid to their charge by men, who are as liable to mistake as themselves, and who seem to them to have fallen into some of the grossest errors. A condemning sentence from such judges carries with it no terror. Sorrow for its uncharitableness, and strong disapprobation of its arrogance, are the principal feelings which it inspires.

It is truly astonishing, that Christians are not more impressed with the unbecoming spirit, the arrogant style, of those, who deny the christian character to professed and exemplary followers of Jesus Christ, because they differ in opinion on some of the most subtle and difficult subjects of theology. A stranger, at hearing the language of these denouncers, would conclude, without a doubt, that they were clothed with infallibility, and were appointed to sit in judgment on their brethren. But for myself, I know not a shadow of pretence for the language of superiority assumed by our adversaries. Are they exempted from the common frailty of our nature? Has God given them superior intelligence? Were they educated under circumstances more favorable to improvement than those whom they condemn? Have they brought to the scriptures more serious, anxious, and unwearied attention? Or do their lives express a deeper reverence for God and for his Son? No. They are fallible, imperfect men, possessing no higher means, and no stronger motives for studying the word of God, than their Unitarian brethren. And yet their language to them is virtually this;—‘We

pronounce you to be in error, and in most dangerous error. We know that we are right, and that you are wrong, in regard to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. You are unworthy the christian name, and unfit to sit with us at the table of Christ. We offer you the truth, and you reject it at the peril of your souls.' Such is the language of humble Christians to men, who in capacity and apparent piety are not inferior to themselves. This language has spread from the leaders through a considerable part of the community. Men in those walks of life which leave them without leisure or opportunities for improvement, are heard to decide on the most intricate points, and to pass sentence on men, whose lives have been devoted to the study of the scriptures. The female, forgetting the tenderness of her sex, and the limited advantages which her education affords for a critical study of the scriptures, inveighs with bitterness against the damnable errors of such men as Newton, Locke, Clarke and Price! The young, too, forget the modesty which belongs to their age, and hurl condemnation on the head which has grown gray in the service of God and mankind. Need I ask, whether this spirit of denunciation for supposed error becomes the humble and fallible disciples of Jesus Christ?

In vindication of this system of exclusion and denunciation, it is often urged, that the 'honor of religion,' the 'purity of the church,' and the 'cause of truth,' forbid those who hold the true gospel, to maintain fellowship with those who support corrupt and injurious opinions. Without stopping to notice the modesty of those who claim an exclusive knowledge of the true gospel, I would answer, that the 'honor of religion' can never suffer by admitting to christian fellowship men of irreproachable lives, whilst it has suffered most severely from that narrow and uncharitable spirit, which has excluded such men for imagined errors. I answer again, that 'the cause of truth' can never suffer by admitting to christian fellowship men, who honestly profess to make the scriptures their rule of faith and practice, whilst it has suffered most severely by substituting for this standard conformity to human creeds and formularies. It is truly wonderful, if excommunication for supposed error be the method of purifying the church, that the church has been so long and so wofully corrupted: Whatever may have been the deficiencies of Christians in other respects, they have certainly discovered no criminal reluctance in applying this instrument of purification. Could the thunders and lightnings of excommunication have corrected the atmosphere of the church, not one pestilential vapor would have loaded it for ages. The air of Paradise would not have

been more pure, more refreshing. But what does history tell us ? It tells us, that the spirit of exclusion and denunciation has contributed more than all other causes to the corruption of the church, to the diffusion of error ; and has rendered the records of the christian community as black, as bloody, as revolting to humanity, as the records of empires founded on conquest and guilt.

But it is said, Did not the apostle denounce the erroneous, and pronounce a curse on the ‘ abettors of another gospel ? ’ This is the strong hold of the friends of denunciation. But let us never forget, that the apostles were inspired men, capable of marking out with unerring certainty, those who substituted ‘ another gospel ’ for the true. Show us their successors, and we will cheerfully obey them.

It is also important to recollect the character of those men, against whom the apostolic anathema was directed. They were men, who knew distinctly what the apostles taught, and yet opposed it ; and who endeavoured to sow division, and to gain followers, in the churches which the apostles had planted. These men, resisting the known instructions of the authorised and inspired teachers of the gospel, and discovering a factious, selfish, mercenary spirit, were justly excluded as unworthy the christian name. But what in common with these men, have the Christians whom it is the custom of the ‘ Orthodox ’ to denounce ? Do these oppose what they know to be the doctrine of Christ and his apostles ? Do they not revere Jesus and his inspired messengers ? Do they not dissent from their brethren, simply because they believe that their brethren dissent from their Lord ? — Let us not forget, that the contest at the present day, is not between the apostles themselves and men who oppose their known instructions, but between uninspired Christians, who equally receive the apostles as authorised teachers of the gospel, and who only differ in judgment as to the interpretation of their writings. How unjust, then, is it for any class of Christians, to confound their opponents with the factious and unprincipled sectarians of the primitive age. Mistake in judgment is the heaviest charge which one denomination has now a right to urge against another ; and do we find that the apostles ever denounced mistake as ‘ awful and fatal hostility ’ to the gospel, that they pronounced anathemas on men who wished to obey, but who misapprehended their doctrines ? The apostles well remembered, that none ever mistook more widely than themselves. They remembered, too, the lenity of their Lord towards their errors, and this lenity they cherished and labored to diffuse.

But it is asked, ~~How~~ ^{and} Christians a right to bear 'solemn testimony' against opinions which are 'utterly subversive of the gospel, and most dangerous to men's eternal interests?' To this I answer, that the opinions of men, who discover equal intelligence and piety with ourselves, are entitled to respectful consideration. If after inquiry they seem erroneous and injurious, we are authorised and bound, according to our ability, to expose, by fair and serious argument, their nature and tendency. But I maintain, that we have no right as individuals, or in an associated capacity, to bear our 'solemn testimony' against these opinions, by menacing with ruin the Christian who listens to them, or by branding them with the most terrifying epithets, for the purpose of preventing candid inquiry into their truth. This is the fashionable mode of 'bearing testimony,' and it is a weapon which will always be most successful in the hands of the proud, the positive, and overbearing, who are most impatient of contradiction, and have least regard to the rights of their brethren.

But whatever may be the right of Christians, as to bearing testimony against opinions which they deem injurious, I deny that they have any right to pass a condemning sentence, on account of these opinions, on the characters of men whose general deportment is conformed to the gospel of Christ. Both scripture and reason unite in teaching, that the best and only standard of character is the life; and he who overlooks the testimony of a christian life, and grounds a sentence of condemnation on opinions, about which he as well as his brother may err, violates most flagrantly the duty of just and candid judgment, and opposes the peaceful and charitable spirit of the gospel. Jesus Christ says, 'By their fruits shall ye know them.' 'Not every one, that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' 'He that heareth and doeth them, my sayings,' i. e. the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, 'I will liken him to a man who built his house upon a rock.' It would be easy to multiply similar passages. The whole scriptures teach us, that he and he only is a Christian, whose life is governed by the precepts of the gospel, and that by this standard alone, the profession of this religion should be tried. We do not deny, that our brethren have a right to form a judgment as to our christian character. But we insist that we have a right to be judged by the fairest, the most approved, and the most settled rules, by which character can be tried; and when these are overlooked, and the

most uncertain standard is applied, we are injured, and an assault on character, which rests on this ground, deserves no better name than defamation and persecution.

I know that this suggestion of persecution will be indignantly repelled by those, who deal most largely in denunciation. But persecution is a wrong or injury inflicted for opinions; and surely assaults on character fall under this definition. Some persons seem to think, that persecution consists in pursuing error with fire and sword; and that therefore it has ceased to exist, except in distempered imaginations, because no class of Christians among us is armed with these terrible weapons. But no. The form is changed, but the spirit lives. Persecution has given up its halter and fagot, but it breathes venom from its lips, and secretly blasts what it cannot openly destroy. For example, a Liberal minister, however circumspect in his walk, however irreproachable in all his relations, no sooner avows his honest convictions on some of the most difficult subjects, than his name begins to be a by-word. A thousand suspicions are infused into his hearers; and it is insinuated, that he is a minister of Satan, in 'the guise of an angel of light.' At a little distance from his home, calumny assumes a bolder tone. He is pronounced an infidel, and it is gravely asked, whether he believes in a God. At a greater distance, his morals are assailed. He is a man of the world, 'leading souls to hell,' to gratify the most selfish passions. But notwithstanding all this, he must not say a word about persecution, for reports like these rack no limbs; they do not even injure a hair of his head; and how then is he persecuted?—Now for myself, I am as willing that my adversary should take my purse or my life, as that he should rob me of my reputation, rob me of the affection of my friends, and of my means of doing good. 'He who takes from me my good name,' takes the best possession of which human power can deprive me. It is true, that a Christian's reputation is comparatively a light object; and so is his property, so is his life; all are light things to him, whose hope is full of immortality. But, of all worldly blessings, an honest reputation is to many of us the most precious; and he who robs us of it, is the most injurious of mankind, and among the worst of persecutors. Let not the friends of denunciation attempt to escape this charge, by pleading their sense of duty, and their sincere desire to promote the cause of truth. St. Dominic was equally sincere, when he built the Inquisition; and I doubt not that many torturers of Christians have fortified their reluctant minds, at the moment of applying the rack and the burning iron, by the sincere conviction, that

the cause of truth required the sacrifice of its foes. I beg that these remarks may not be applied indiscriminately to the party called ‘Orthodox,’ among whom are multitudes, whose humility and charity would revolt from making themselves the standards of christian piety, and from assailing the christian character of their brethren.

Many other considerations may be added to those which have been already urged, against the system of excluding from christian fellowship men of upright lives, on account of their opinions. It necessarily generates perpetual discord in the church. Men differ in opinions as much as in features. No two minds are perfectly accordant. The shades of belief are infinitely diversified; ~~Amidst this immense variety of sentiment, every man is right in his own eyes.~~ Every man discovers errors in the creed of his brother. Every man is prone to magnify the importance of his own peculiarities, and to discover danger in the peculiarities of others. This is human nature. Every man is partial to his own opinions, because they are his own, and his self-will and pride are wounded by contradiction. Now what must we expect, when beings so erring, so divided in sentiment, and so apt to be unjust to the views of others, assert the right of excluding one another from the christian church on account of imagined error? As the scriptures confine this right to no individual and to no body of Christians, it belongs alike to all; and what must we expect, when Christians of all capacities and dispositions, the ignorant, prejudiced, and self-conceited, imagine it their duty to prescribe opinions to Christendom, and to open or to shut the door of the church according to the decision which their neighbours may form on some of the most perplexing points of theology? This question, unhappily, has received answer upon answer in ecclesiastical history. We there see Christians denouncing and excommunicating one another for supposed error, until every denomination has been pronounced accursed by some portion of the christian world; so that were the curses of men to prevail, not one human being would enter heaven. To me it appears, that to plead for the right of excluding men of blameless lives, on account of their opinions, is to sound the peal of perpetual and universal war. Arm men with this power, and we shall have ‘nothing but thunder.’ Some persons are sufficiently simple to imagine, that if this ‘horrid Unitarianism’ were once hunted down, and put quietly into its grave, the church would be at peace. But our present contests have their origin, not in the ~~committals~~ of Unitarianism, but very much in the prin-

APPENDIX.

ciples of human nature, in the love of power, in impatience of contradiction, in men's passion for imposing their own views upon others, in the same causes which render them anxious to make proselytes to all their opinions. Were Unitarianism quietly interred, another and another hideous form of error would start up before the zealous guardians of the "purity of the church." The Arminian, from whom the pursuit has been diverted for a time by his more offending Unitarian brother, would soon be awakened from his dream of security, by the clamor of denunciation; and should the Arminian fall a prey, the Calvinists would then find time to look into the controversies among themselves, and almost every class would discover, with the eagle eye of their brethren at New-York, that those who differ from them hold 'another gospel,' and ought to be 'resisted and denounced.' Thus the wars of Christians will be perpetual. Never will there be peace, until Christians agree to differ, and agree to look for the evidences of christian character in the temper and the life.

Another argument against this practice of denouncing the supposed errors of sincere professors of Christianity, is this. It exalts to supremacy in the church, men who have the least claim to influence. Humble, meek, and affectionate Christians are least disposed to make creeds for their brethren, and to denounce those who differ from them. On the contrary, the impetuous, proud, and enthusiastic, men who cannot or will not weigh the arguments of opponents, are always most positive, and most unsparing in denunciation. These take the lead in a system of exclusion. They have no false modesty, no false charity, to shackle their zeal in framing fundamentals for their brethren, and in punishing the obstinate in error. The consequence is, that creeds are formed, which exclude from Christ's church some of his truest followers, which outrage reason as well as revelation, and which subsequent ages are obliged to mutilate and explain away, lest the whole religion be rejected by men of reflection. Such has been the history of the church. It is strange that we do not learn wisdom from the past. What man who feels his own fallibility, who sees the errors into which the positive and 'orthodox' of former times have been betrayed, and who considers his own utter inability to decide on the degree of truth, which every mind, of every capacity, must receive in order to salvation, will not tremble at the responsibility of prescribing to his brethren, in his own words, the views they must maintain on the most perplexing subjects of religion? Humility will always leave this work to others.

Another important consideration is, that this system of excluding men of apparent sincerity, for their opinions, entirely subverts free inquiry into the scriptures. When once a particular system is surrounded by this bulwark; when once its defenders have brought the majority to believe, that the rejection of it is a mark of depravity and perdition, what but the name of liberty is left to Christians? The obstacles to inquiry are as real, and may be as powerful, as in the neighbourhood of the Inquisition. The multitude dare not think, and the thinking dare not speak. The right of private judgment may thus, in a Protestant country, be reduced to a nullity. It is true, that men are sent to the scriptures; but they are told before they go, that they will be driven from the church on earth and in heaven, unless they find in the scriptures the doctrines which are embodied in the popular creed. They are told, indeed, to inquire for themselves; but they are also told, at what points inquiry must arrive; and the sentence of exclusion hangs over them, if they happen to stray, with some of the best and wisest men, into forbidden paths. Now this 'Protestant liberty' is, in one respect, more irritating than Papal bondage. It mocks as well as enslaves us. It talks to us courteously as friends and brethren, whilst it rivets our chains. It invites and even charges us to look with our own eyes, but with the same breath warns us against seeing anything which Orthodox eyes have not seen before us. Is this a state of things favorable to serious inquiry into the truths of the gospel; yet, how long has the church been groaning under this cruel yoke?

Another objection to this system of excluding professed disciples of Christ, on account of their opinions, is, that it is inconsistent with the great principles of Congregationalism. In churches, where the power is lodged in a few individuals, who are supposed to be the most learned men in the community, the work of marking out and excluding the erroneous may seem less difficult. But among Congregationalists, the tribunal before which the offender is to be brought is the whole church, consisting partly of men in humble circumstances, and of unimproved minds; partly of men engaged in active and pressing business; and partly of men of education, whose studies have been directed to law and medicine. Now is this a tribunal, before which the most intricate points of theology are to be discussed, and serious inquirers are to answer for opinions, which they have perhaps examined more laboriously and faithfully than all their judges? Would a church of humble men, conscious of their limited opportunities, consent to try, for these

pretended crimes, professing Christians, as intelligent, as honest, and as exemplary as themselves. It is evident, that in the business of excluding men for opinions, a church can be little more than the tool of the minister, or a few influential members; and our churches are, in general, too independent and too upright to take this part in so solemn a transaction. To correct their deficiencies, and to quicken their zeal on this point, we are now threatened with new tribunals, or Consociations, whose office it will be to try ministers for their errors, to inspect the churches, and to advise and assist them in the extirpation of 'heresy.' Whilst the laity are slumbering, the ancient and free constitution of our churches is silently undermined, and is crumbling away. Since argument is insufficient to produce uniformity of opinion, recourse must be had to more powerful instruments of conviction; I mean, to ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS. And are these people indeed prepared to submit to this most degrading form of vassalage; a vassalage, which reaches and palsies the mind, and imposes on it the dreams and fictions of men, for the everlasting truth of God !

These remarks lead me to the last consideration which I shall urge against the proposed system of exclusion and separation. This system will shake to the foundation our religious institutions, and destroy many habits and connexions which have had the happiest influence on the religious character of this people. In the first place, if christian communion and all acknowledgements of christian character are to be denied on the ground of difference of opinion, the annual 'Convention of Congregational Ministers, of Massachusetts,' that ancient bond of union, must be dissolved; and in its dissolution we shall lose the edifying, honorable, and rare example of ministers regularly assembling, not to exercise power and to fetter the conscience, but to reciprocate kind affection, and to unite in sending relief to the families of their deceased brethren. This event may gladden the heart of the sectarian; it will carry no joy to the widow and orphan.—In the next place, the 'Associations of Ministers' in our different counties, must in many cases be broken up, to make room for new associations, founded on similarity of opinion. Thus, that intercourse, which now subsists between ministers of different persuasions, and which tends to enlarge the mind, and to give a liberality to the feelings, will be diminished, if not destroyed; and ministers, becoming more contracted and exclusive, will communicate more of this unhappy spirit to their societies.—In the next place, neighbouring churches; which, from their very foundation, have cultivated christian communion, and

counselled and comforted each other, will be mutually estranged, and catching the temper of their religious guides, will exchange fellowship for denunciation; and instead of delighting in each other's prosperity, will seek each other's destruction.—Again; in the same church, where Christians of different views have long acknowledged each other as disciples of our Master, and have partaken the same feast of charity, angry divisions will break forth, parties will be marshalled under different leaders, the sentence of excommunication will be hurled by the majority on their guiltless brethren (if the majority should be 'orthodox'), and thus anger, heart-burnings, and bitter recriminations will spread through many of our towns and churches.—Again; many of our religious societies will be rent asunder, their ministers dismissed, and religious institutions cease. It is well known, that many of our country parishes are able to support but a single minister. At the same time, they are divided in sentiment; and nothing but a spirit of charity and forbearance has produced that union, by which public worship has been maintained. Once let the proposed war be proclaimed, let the standard of party be raised, and a minister must look for support to that party only to which he is attached. An 'Orthodox' minister should blush to ask it from men, whom he denounces for honest opinions, and to whom he denies all the ordinances of the gospel. It surely cannot be expected that Liberal Christians will contribute, by their property, to uphold a system of exclusion and intolerance directed against themselves. What then will be the fate of many of our societies? Their ministers, even now, can with difficulty maintain the conflict with other denominations. Must they not sink, when deserted by their most efficient friends? Many societies will be left, as sheep without a shepherd, a prey to those whom we call sectarians, but who will no longer have an exclusive right to the name, if the system of division, which has been proposed, be adopted. Many ministers will be compelled to leave the field of their labors and their prospects of usefulness; and I fear the ministry will lose its hold on the affection and veneration of men, when it shall have engendered so much division and contention.—But this is not all. The system of denying the Christian name to those who differ from us in interpreting the scriptures, will carry discord not only into churches, but families. In how many instances are heads of families divided in opinion on the present subjects of controversy. Hitherto they have loved each other as partakers of the same glorious hopes, and have repaired in their domestic joys and sorrows to the same God, (as they imag-

ined,) through the same Mediator. But now they are taught, that they have different Gods and different gospels, and are taught that the friends of truth are not to hold communion with its rejecters. Let this doctrine be received; and one of the tenderest ties by which many wedded hearts are knit together will be dissolved. The family altar must fall. Religion will be known in many a domestic retreat, not as a bond of union, but a subject of debate, a source of discord or depression.

Now I ask, For what boon are all these sacrifices to be made? The great end is, that certain opinions, which have been embraced by many serious and inquiring Christians as the truth of God, may be driven from the church, and be dreaded by the people as among the worst of crimes. Uniformity of opinion, that airy good, which emperors, popes, councils, synods, bishops, and ministers have been seeking for ages, by edicts, creeds, threatenings, excommunications, inquisitions, and flames,—this is the great object of the system of exclusion, separation, and denunciation which is now to be introduced. To this we are to sacrifice our established habits and bonds of union, and this is to be pursued by means, which, as many reflecting men believe, threaten our dearest rights and liberties.

It is sincerely hoped, that reflecting laymen will no longer shut their eyes on this subject. It is a melancholy fact, that our long established Congregational form of church government is menaced, and tribunals unknown to our churches, and unknown, as we believe, to the scriptures, are to be introduced; and introduced for the very purpose, that the supposed errors and mistakes of ministers and private Christians may be tried and punished as heresies, that is, as crimes. In these tribunals, as in all ecclesiastical bodies, the clergy, who make theology their profession, will of necessity have a preponderating influence, so that the question now before the public is in fact only a new form of the old controversy, which has agitated all ages; viz. whether the clergy shall think for the laity, or prescribe to them their religion. Were this question fairly proposed to the public, there would be but one answer; but it is wrapped up in a dark phraseology about the purity and order of the church, a phraseology, which, I believe, imposes on multitudes of ministers as well as laymen, and induces acquiescence in measures, the real tendency of which they would abhor. It is, I hope, from no feeling of party, but from a sincere regard to the religion of Christ, that I would rouse the slumbering minds of this community to the dangers which hang over their religious institutions. No power is so rapidly accumulated, or so dreadfully abused, as

ecclesiastical power. It assails men with menaces of eternal wo, unless they submit, and gradually awes the most stubborn and strongest minds into subjection. I mean not to ascribe the intention of introducing ecclesiastical tyranny to any class of Christians among us; but I believe, that many, in the fervor of a zeal which may be essentially virtuous, are about to touch with unhallowed hands the ark of God, to support Christianity by measures which its mild and charitable spirit abhors. I believe, that many, overlooking the principles of human nature, and the history of the church, are about to set in motion a spring of which they know not the force, and cannot calculate the effects. I believe, that the seed of spiritual tyranny is sown, and although to a careless spectator it may seem the ‘smallest of all seeds,’ it has yet, within itself, a fatal principle of increase, and may yet darken this region of our country with its deadly branches.

The time is come, when the friends of christian liberty and christian charity are called to awake, and to remember their duties to themselves, to posterity, and to the church of Christ. The time is come, when the rights of conscience and the freedom of our churches must be defended with zeal. The time is come, when menace and denunciation must be met with a spirit, which will show that we dread not the frowns, and lean not on the favor of man. The time is come, when every expression of superiority on the part of our brethren should be repelled as criminal usurpation. But in doing this, let the friends of liberal and genuine Christianity remember the spirit of their religion. Let no passion or bitterness dishonor their sacred cause. In contending for the gospel, let them not lose its virtues or forfeit its promises.—We are indeed called to pass through one of the severest trials of human virtue, the trial of controversy. We should carry with us a sense of its danger. Religion, when made a subject of debate, seems often to lose its empire over the heart and life. The mild and affectionate spirit of Christianity gives place to angry recriminations and cruel surmises. Fair dealing, uprightness, and truth, are exchanged for the arts of sophistry. The devotional feelings, too, decline in warmth and tenderness. Let us then watch and pray. Let us take heed that the weapons of our warfare be not carnal. Whilst we repel usurpation, let us be just to the general rectitude of many by whom our christian rights are invaded. Whilst we repel the uncharitable censures of men, let us not forget that deep humility and sense of unworthiness with which we should ever appear before God. In our zeal to maintain the

great truth, that our FATHER IN HEAVEN is alone the Supreme God, let us not neglect that intercourse with him, without which the purest conceptions will avail little to enthrone him in our hearts. In our zeal to hold fast the ‘word of Christ’ in opposition to human creeds and formalities, let us not forget, that our Lord demands another and a still more unsuspicious confession of him, even the exhibition of his spirit and religion in our lives.

The controversy in which we are engaged is indeed painful; but it was not chosen, but forced upon us, and we ought to regard it as a part of the discipline to which a wise Providence has seen fit to subject us. Like all other trials, it is designed to promote our moral perfection. I trust, too, that it is designed to promote the cause of truth. Whilst I would speak diffidently of the future, I still hope, that a brighter day is rising on the christian church, than it has yet enjoyed. The gospel is to shine forth in its native glory. The violent excitement, by which some of the corruptions of this divine system are now supported, cannot be permanent; and the uncharitableness with which they are enforced, will react, like the persecutions of the church of Rome, in favor of truth. Already we have the comfort of seeing many disposed to inquire, and to inquire without that terror, which has bound as with a spell so many minds. We doubt not, that this inquiry will result in a deep conviction that Christianity is yet disfigured by errors which have been transmitted from ages of darkness. Of this, at least, we are sure, that inquiry, by discovering to men the difficulties and obscurities which attend the present topics of controversy, will terminate in what is infinitely more desirable than doctrinal concord, in the diffusion of a mild, candid, and charitable temper. I pray God, that this most happy consummation may be in no degree obstructed by any unchristian feelings, which, notwithstanding my sincere efforts, have escaped me in the present controversy.

OBJECTIONS TO UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY CONSIDERED. 1819.

It is due to truth, and a just deference to our fellow Christians, to take notice of objections which are currently made to our particular views of religion; nor ought we to dismiss such objections, as unworthy of attention, on account of their supposed lightness; because what is light to us, may weigh much with our neighbour, and truth may suffer from obstructions which a few explanations might remove. It is to be feared that those Christians, who are called Unitarian, have been wanting in this duty. Whilst they have met the labored arguments of their opponents fully and fairly, they have overlooked the loose, vague, indefinite objections, which float through the community, and operate more on common minds than formal reasoning. On some of these objections, remarks will now be offered; and it is hoped that our plainness of speech will not be construed into severity, nor our strictures on different systems be ascribed to a desire of retaliation. It cannot be expected, that we shall repel with indifference, what seem to us reproaches on some of the most important and consoling views of Christianity. Believing that the truths, which through God's good providence we are called to maintain, are necessary to the vindication of the divine character, and to the prevalence of a more enlightened and exalted piety, we are bound to assert them earnestly, and to speak freely of the opposite errors which now disfigure Christianity.—What then are the principal objections to Unitarian Christianity?

1. It is objected to us, that we deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Now what does this objection mean? What are we to understand by the Divinity of Christ? In the sense in which many Christians, and perhaps a majority, interpret it, we do not deny it, but believe it as firmly as themselves. We believe firmly in the Divinity of Christ's mission and office, that he spoke with divine authority, and was a bright image of the divine perfections. We believe that God dwelt in him, manifested himself through him, taught men by him, and communicated to him his spirit without measure. We believe that Jesus Christ was the most glorious display, expression, and representative of God to mankind, so that in seeing and knowing him, we see and know the invisible Father; so that when Christ came, God visited the world and dwelt with men more conspicuously than at any former period. In Christ's words, we hear God speaking; in his miracles, we behold God acting; in his character and

life, we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love. We believe, then, in the Divinity of Christ, as this term is often and properly used.—How, then, it may be asked, do we differ from other Christians? We differ in this important respect. Whilst we honor Christ as the son, representative, and image of the Supreme God, we do not believe him to be the Supreme God himself. We maintain, that Christ and God are *distinct beings*, two beings, not one and the same being. On this point a little repetition may be pardoned, for many good Christians, after the controversies of ages, misunderstand the precise difference between us and themselves. Trinitarianism teaches, that Jesus Christ is the Supreme and Infinite God, and that he and his Father are not only one in affection, counsel, and will, but are strictly and literally one and the same being. Now to us this doctrine is most unscriptural and irrational. We say that the Son cannot be the same being with his own Father; that he, who was sent into the world to save it, cannot be the living God who sent him. The language of Jesus is explicit and unqualified. ‘I came not to do mine own will.’—‘I came not from myself.’—‘I came from God.’ Now we affirm, and this is our chief heresy, that Jesus was not and could not be the God from whom he came, but was another being; and it amazes us that any can resist this simple truth. The doctrine, that Jesus, who was born at Bethlehem; who eat and drank and slept; who suffered and was crucified; who came from God; who prayed to God; who did God's will; and who said, on leaving the world, ‘I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;’ the doctrine that this Jesus was the Supreme God himself, and the same being with his Father, this seems to us a contradiction to reason and scripture so flagrant, that the simple statement of it is a sufficient refutation. We are often charged with degrading Christ; but if this reproach belong to any Christians, it falls, we fear, on those who accuse him of teaching a doctrine so contradictory, and so subversive of the supremacy of our Heavenly Father. Certainly our humble and devout Master has given no ground for this accusation. He always expressed towards God the reverence of a son. He habitually distinguished himself from God. He referred to God all his powers. He said without limitation or reserve, ‘The Father is greater than I.’—‘Of myself I can do nothing.’ If to represent Christ as a being distinct from God, and as inferior to him, be to degrade him, then let our opponents lay the guilt where it belongs, not on us, but on our Master, whose language we borrow, in whose very words we express our sentiments, whose words we dare not trifle

with and force from their plain sense. Our limits will not allow us to say more; but we ask common Christians, who have taken their opinions from the bible rather than from human systems, to look honestly into their own minds, and to answer frankly, whether they have not understood and believed Christ's divinity, in the sense maintained by us, rather than in that for which the Trinitarians contend.

2. I proceed to another objection, and one which probably weighs more with multitudes than any other. It is this, that our doctrine respecting Christ takes from the sinner the only ground of hope. It is said by our opponents, 'We and all men are sinners by our very nature, and infinitely guilty before God. The sword of divine justice hangs over us, and hell opens beneath us; and where shall we find a refuge but in an infinite Saviour? We want an Infinite Atonement; and in depriving us of this, you rob us of our hope, you tear from the scriptures the only doctrine which meets our wants. We may burn our bibles, if your interpretation be true, for our case is desperate; we are lost forever.' In such warm and wild language, altogether unwarranted by scripture, yet exceedingly fitted to work on common and terror-stricken minds, our doctrine is constantly assailed.

Now to this declamation, for such we esteem it, we oppose one plain request. Show us, we say, a single passage in the bible in which we are told, that the sin of man is infinite, and needs an infinite atonement. We find not one. Not even a whisper of this doctrine comes to us from the sacred writers. Let us stop a moment and weigh this doctrine. It teaches us that man, although created by God a frail, erring, and imperfect being, and even created with an irresistible propensity to sin, is yet regarded by his Creator as an infinite offender, meriting infinite punishment for his earliest transgressions; and that he is doomed to endless torment, unless an infinite Saviour appear for his rescue! How can any one, we ask, charge on our benevolent and righteous Parent such a government of his creatures.—We maintain, that man is not created in a condition which makes an infinite atonement necessary; nor do we believe that any creature can fall into a condition, from which God may not deliver him without this rigid expedient. Surely, if an infinite satisfaction to justice were indispensable to our salvation, if God took on him human nature for the very purpose of offering it, and if this fact constitute the peculiar glory, the life and essence, and the saving efficacy of the gospel, we must find it expressed clearly, definitely, in at least one passage

in the bible. But not one, we repeat it, can be found there.—We maintain, farther, that this doctrine of God becoming a victim and sacrifice for his own rebellious subjects, is as irrational as it is unscriptural. We have always supposed that atonement, if necessary, was to be made *to*, not by, the sovereign who has been offended; and we cannot conceive a more unlikely method of vindicating his authority, than that he himself should bear the punishment which is due *to* transgressors of his laws.—We have another objection. If an infinite atonement be necessary, and if, consequently, none but God can make it, we see not but that God must become a sufferer, must take upon himself our pain and wo; a thought from which a pious mind shrinks with horror. To escape this difficulty, we are told, that Christ suffered as man, not as God; but if man only suffered, if only a human and finite mind suffered, if Christ, as God, was perfectly happy on the cross, and bore only a short and limited pain in his human nature, where, we ask, was the infinite atonement? Where is the boasted hope, which this doctrine is said to give to the sinner?

The objection, that there is no hope for the sinner, unless Christ be the Infinite God, amazes us. Surely if we have a Father in heaven, of infinite goodness and power, we need no other infinite person to save us. The common doctrine disparages and dishonors the only true God, our Father, as if, without the help of a second and a third divinity, equal to himself, he could not restore his frail creature, man. We have not the courage of our brethren. With the scriptures in our hand, with the solemn attestations which they contain to the divine Unity, and to Christ's dependence, we dare not give to the God and Father of Jesus an equal or rival, in the glory of originating our redemption, or of accomplishing it by undivided and infinite power.—Are we asked, as we sometimes are, what is our hope, if Christ be not the supreme God? We answer, it is the boundless and almighty goodness of his Father and our Father; a goodness, which cannot require an infinite atonement for the sins of a frail and limited creature. God's essential and unchangeable mercy, not Christ's infinity, is the scriptural foundation of a sinner's hope. In the scriptures, our heavenly Father is always represented as the sole original, spring, and first cause of our salvation; and let no one presume to divide His glory with another. That Jesus came to save us, we owe entirely to the Father's benevolent appointment. That Jesus is perfectly adequate to the work of our salvation, is to be believed, not because he is himself the supreme God, but because the supreme

and unerring God selected, commissioned, and empowered him for this office.—That his death is an important means of our salvation, we gratefully acknowledge; but ascribe its efficacy to the merciful disposition of God towards the human race. To build the hope of pardon on the independent and infinite sufficiency of Jesus Christ, is to build on an unscriptural and false foundation; for Jesus teaches us, that of himself he can do nothing; that all power is given to him by his Father; and that he is a proper object of trust, because he came not of himself, or to do his own will, but because the Father sent him. We indeed lean on Christ, but it is because he is ‘a corner-stone, chosen by God and laid by God in Zion.’ God’s forgiving love, declared to mankind by Jesus Christ, and exercised through him, is the foundation of hope to the penitent, on which we primarily rest, and a firmer the universe cannot furnish us.

3. We now proceed to another objection. We are charged with expecting to be saved by Works, and not by Grace. This charge may be easily despatched, and a more groundless one cannot easily be imagined. We indeed attach great importance to christian works, or christian obedience, believing that a practice or life, conformed to the precepts and example of Jesus, is the great end for which faith in him is required, and is the great condition on which everlasting life is bestowed. We are accustomed to speak highly of the virtues and improvements of a true Christian, rejecting with abhorrence the idea, that they are no better than the outward Jewish righteousness, which the prophet called ‘filthy rags;’ and maintaining with the apostle, that they are ‘in the sight of God, of great price.’ We believe that holiness or virtue is the very image of God in the human soul, a ray of his brightness, the best gift which he communicates to his creatures, the highest benefit which Christ came to confer, the only important and lasting distinction between man and man. Still we always and earnestly maintain, that no human virtue, no human obedience, can give a legal claim, a right by merit, to the life and immortality brought to light by Christ. We see and mourn over the deficiencies, broken resolutions, and mixed motives of the best men. We always affirm, that God’s grace, benignity, free kindness, is needed by the most advanced Christians, and that to this alone we owe the promise in the gospel, of full remission and everlasting happiness to the penitent. None speak of mercy more constantly than we. One of our distinctions is, that we magnify this lovely attribute of the Deity. So accustomed are we to insist on the infinity of God’s

grace and mercy, that our adversaries often charge us with forgetting his justice; and yet it is objected to us, that, renouncing grace, we appeal to justice, and build our hope on the abundance of our merit!

4. We now proceed to another objection often urged against our views, or rather against those who preach them; and it is this, that we preach Morality. To meet this objection we beg to know what is intended by morality. Are we to understand by it, what it properly signifies, our whole duty, however made known to us, whether by nature or revelation? Does it mean the whole extent of those obligations which belong to us as moral beings? Does it mean that 'sober, righteous, godly life,' which our moral Governor has prescribed to us by his Son, as the great preparation for heaven? If this be morality, we cheerfully plead guilty to the charge of preaching it, and of laboring chiefly and constantly to enforce it; and believing, as we do, that all the doctrines, precepts, threatenings, and promises of the gospel, are revealed for no other end than to make men moral, in this true and generous sense, we hope to continue to merit this reproach.

We fear, however, that this is not the meaning of the morality, which is said to be the burden of our preaching. Some, at least, who thus reproach us, mean, that we are accustomed to enjoin only a worldly and social morality, consisting in common honesty, common kindness, and freedom from gross vices; neglecting to inculcate inward purity, devotion, heavenly-mindedness, and love to Jesus Christ. We hope that the persons who thus accuse us speak from rumor, and have never heard our instructions for themselves; for the charge is false; and no one who ever sat under our ministry can urge it, without branding himself a slanderer. The first and great commandment, which is to love God supremely, is recognised and enforced habitually in our preaching; and our obligations to Jesus Christ, the friend who died for us, are urged, we hope, not wholly without tenderness and effect.

It is but justice, however, to observe of many, that when they reproach us with moral preaching, they do not mean that we teach only outward decencies, but that we do not inculcate certain favorite doctrines, which are to them the very marrow and richness of the gospel. When such persons hear a sermon, be the subject what it may, which is not seasoned with recognitions of the trinity, total depravity, and similar articles of faith, they call it moral. According to this strange and unwarrantable use of the term, we rejoice to say that we are 'moral preachers;' and it comforts us

that we have for our pattern, ‘ him who spake as never man spake,’ and who, in his longest discourse, has dropped not a word about a trinity, or inborn corruption, or special and electing grace; and still more, we seriously doubt whether our preaching could with propriety be called moral, did we urge these doctrines, especially the two last; for however warmly they may be defended by honest men, they seem to us to border on immorality; that is, to dishonor God, to weaken the sense of responsibility, to break the spirit, and to loosen the restraints on guilty passion.

5. Another objection urged against us, is, that our system does not produce as much zeal, seriousness, and piety as other views of religion. This objection it is difficult to repel, except by language which will seem to be a boasting of ourselves. When expressed in plain language, it amounts to this;—‘ We Trinitarians and Calvinists are better and more pious than you Unitarians, and consequently our system is more scriptural than yours.’ Now assertions of this kind do not strike us as very modest and humble, and we believe that truth does not require us to defend it by setting up our piety above that of our neighbours.—This, however, we would say, that if our zeal and devotion are faint, the fault is our own, not that of our doctrine. We are sure that our views of the Supreme Being are incomparably more affecting and attractive, than those which we oppose. It is the great excellence of our system, that it exalts God, vindicates his paternal attributes, and appeals powerfully to the ingenuous principles of love, gratitude, and veneration; and when we compare it with the doctrines which are spread around us, we feel that of all men we are most inexcusable, if a filial piety do not spring up and grow strong in our hearts.

Perhaps it may not be difficult to suggest some causes for the charge, that our views do not favor seriousness and zeal. One reason probably is, that we interpret with much rigor those precepts of Christ, which forbid ostentation, and enjoin modesty and retirement in devotion. We dread a showy religion. We are disgusted with pretensions to superior sanctity, that stale and vulgar way of building up a sect. We believe that true religion speaks in actions more than in words, and manifests itself chiefly in the common temper and life; in giving up the passions to God’s authority, in inflexible uprightness and truth, in active and modest charity, in candid judgment, and in patience under trials and injuries. We think it no part of piety to publish its fervors, but prefer a delicacy in regard to these secrets of the soul; and hence, to those persons, who think religion is to be worn conspicuously and spoken of passionately, we

may seem cold and dead, when perhaps, were the heart uncovered, it might be seen to be 'alive to God,' as truly as their own.

Again, it is one of our principles, flowing necessarily from our views of God, that religion is cheerful; that where its natural tendency is not obstructed by false theology, or a melancholy temperament, it opens the heart to every pure and innocent pleasure. We do not think that piety disfigures its face, or wraps itself in a funeral pall as its appropriate garb. Now too many conceive of religion as something gloomy, and never to be named but with an altered tone and countenance; and where they miss these imagined signs of piety, they can hardly believe that a sense of God dwells in the heart.

Another cause of the error in question we believe to be this. Our religious system excludes, or at least does not favor, those overwhelming terrors and transports, which many think essential to piety. We do not believe in shaking and disordering men's understandings by excessive fear, as a preparation for supernatural grace and immediate conversion. This we regard as a dreadful corruption and degradation of religion. Religion, we believe, is a gradual and rational work, beginning sometimes in sudden impressions, but confirmed by reflection, growing by the regular use of christian means; and advancing silently to perfection. Now, because we specify no time when we were overpowered and created anew by irresistible impulse; because we relate no agonies of despair succeeded by miraculous light and joy, we are thought by some to be strangers to piety;—how reasonably let the judicious determine.

Once more; we are thought to want zeal, because our principles forbid us to use many methods for spreading them, which are common with other Christians. Whilst we value highly our peculiar views, and look to them for the best fruits of piety, we still consider ourselves as bound to think charitably of those who doubt or deny them; and with this conviction, we cannot enforce them with that vehemence, positiveness, and style of menace, which constitute much of the zeal of certain denominations;—and we freely confess that we would on no account exchange our charity for their zeal; and we trust that the time is near, when he who holds what he deems truth with lenity and forbearance, will be accounted more pious than he who compasseth sea and land to make proselytes to his sect, and 'shuts the gates of mercy' on all who will not bow their understandings to his creed.—We fear, that in these remarks we may have been unconsciously betrayed into a self-exalting

spirit. Nothing could have drawn them from us, but the fact that a very common method of opposing our sentiments is to decry the piety of those who adopt them. After all, we mean not to deny our great deficiencies. We have nothing to boast before God, although the cause of truth forbids us to submit to the censoriousness of our brethren.

6. Another objection to our views, is, that they lead to a rejection of revelation. Unitarianism has been called ‘a half-way house to infidelity.’—Now to this objection we need not oppose general reasonings. We will state a plain fact. It is this.—A large proportion of the most able and illustrious defenders of the truth of Christianity have been Unitarians; and our religion has received from them, to say the least, as important service in its conflicts with infidelity, as from any class of Christians whatever. From the long catalogue of advocates of Christianity among Unitarians, we can select now but a few; but these few are a host. The name of John Locke is familiar to every scholar. He rendered distinguished service to the philosophy of the human mind; nor is this his highest praise. His writings on government and toleration contributed more than those of any other individual, to the diffusion of free and generous sentiments through Europe and America; and perhaps Bishop Watson was not guilty of great exaggeration, when he said, ‘This great man has done more for the establishment of pure Christianity than any author I am acquainted with.’ He was a laborious and successful student of the scriptures. His works on the ‘Epistles of Paul,’ and on the ‘Reasonableness of Christianity,’ formed an era in sacred literature; and he has the honor of having shed a new and bright light on the darkest parts of the New Testament, and in general on the Christian system. Now Locke, be it remembered, was a Unitarian.—We pass to another intellectual prodigy—to Newton, a name which every man of learning pronounces with reverence; for it reminds him of faculties so exalted above those of ordinary men, that they seem designed to help our conceptions of superior orders of being. This great man, who gained by intuition what others reap from laborious research, after exploring the laws of the universe, turned for light and hope to the bible; and although his theological works cannot be compared with Locke’s, yet in his illustrations of the prophecies, and of scripture chronology, and in his criticisms on two doubtful passages,* which are among the chief supports of the doctrine of the trinity, he is considered as having rendered valua-

* 1 John v. 7.—1 Tim. iii. 16.

ble service to the christian cause. Newton, too, was a Unitarian.—We are not accustomed to boast of men, or to prop our faith by great names; for Christ, and He only, is our Master;—but it is with pleasure, that we find in our ranks the most gifted, sagacious, and exalted minds; and we cannot but smile, when we sometimes hear from men and women of very limited culture, and with no advantages for enlarged inquiry, reproachful and contemptuous remarks on a doctrine which the vast intelligence of Locke and Newton, after much study of the scriptures, and in opposition to a prejudiced and intolerant age, received as the truth of God. It is proper to state that doubts have lately been raised as to the religious opinions of Locke and Newton, and for a very obvious reason. In these times of growing light, their names have been found too useful to the Unitarian cause. But the long and general belief of the Unitarianism of these illustrious men, can hardly be accounted for, but by admitting the fact; and we know of no serious attempts to set aside the proofs on which this belief is founded.

We pass to another writer, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Church of England and of the age in which he lived, Dr. Samuel Clarke. In classical literature and in metaphysical speculation, Dr. Clarke has a reputation which needs no tribute at our hands. His sermons are an invaluable repository of scriptural criticism; and his work on the evidences of natural and revealed religion, has ever been considered as one of the ablest vindications of our common faith. This great man was a Unitarian. He believed firmly that Jesus was a distinct being from his Father; and a derived and dependent being; and he desired to bring the liturgy of his church into a correspondence with these doctrines.

To those who are acquainted with the memorable infidel controversy in the early part of the last century, excited by the writings of Bolingbroke, Tindal, Morgan, Collins, and Chubb, it will be unnecessary to speak of the zeal and power with which the christian cause was maintained by learned Unitarians. But we must pass over these to recall a man, whose memory is precious to enlightened believers; we mean Lardner, that most patient and successful advocate of Christianity; who has written, we believe, more largely than any other author on the evidences of the gospel; from whose works later authors have drawn as from a treasurehouse; and whose purity and mildness have disarmed the severity and conciliated the respect of men of very different views from his own. Lardner was a Unitarian.—Next to Lardner, the most laborious advocate of Christianity against the attacks of infidels, in our own

day, was Priestley; and whatever we may think of some of his opinions, we believe that none of his opposers ever questioned the importance of his vindications of our common faith. We certainly do not say too much, when we affirm that Unitarians have not been surpassed by any denomination in zealous, substantial service to the christian cause. Yet we are told that Unitarianism leads to infidelity. We are reproached with defection from that religion, round which we have gathered in the day of its danger, and from which, we trust, persecution and death cannot divorce us.

It is indeed said, that instances have occurred of persons, who, having given up the Trinitarian doctrine, have not stopped there, but have resigned one part of Christianity after another, until they have become thorough infidels. To this we answer, that such instances we have never known; but that such should occur is not improbable, and is what we should even expect; for it is natural that when the mind has detected one error in its creed, it should distrust every other article, and should exchange its blind and hereditary assent for a sweeping skepticism. We have examples of this truth at the present moment, both in France and Spain, where multitudes have proceeded from rejecting Popery to absolute Atheism. Now who of us will argue that the Catholic faith is true, because multitudes who relinquished it, have also cast away every religious principle and restraint; and if the argument be not sound on the side of Popery, how can it be pressed into the service of Trinitarianism? The fact is, that false and absurd doctrines, when exposed, have a natural tendency to beget skepticism in those who received them without reflection. None are so likely to believe too little as those who have begun with believing too much; and hence we charge upon Trinitarianism whatever tendency may exist in those who forsake it, to sink gradually into infidelity.

Unitarianism does not lead to infidelity. On the contrary, its excellence is, that it fortifies faith. Unitarianism is Christianity stripped of those corrupt additions, which shock reason and our moral feelings. It is a rational and amiable system, against which no man's understanding, or conscience, or charity, or piety revolts. Can the same be said of that system, which teaches the doctrines of three equal persons in one God, of natural and total depravity, of infinite atonement, of special and electing grace, and of the everlasting misery of the non-elected part of mankind? We believe that unless Christianity be purified from these corruptions, it will not be able to bear the unsparing scrutiny to which the progress of society is exposing it. We believe that it must be reformed, or

intelligent men will abandon it. As the friends of Christianity, and the foes of infidelity, we are therefore solicitous to diffuse what seem to us nobler and juster views of this divine system.

7. It was our purpose to consider one more objection to our views; viz. that they give no consolation in sickness and death. But we have only time to express amazement at such a charge. What! a system which insists with a peculiar energy on the pardoning mercy of God, on his universal and parental love, and on the doctrine of a resurrection and immortality—such a system unable to give comfort? It unlocks infinite springs of consolation and joy, and gives to him who practically receives it, a living, overflowing, and unspeakable hope. Its power to sustain the soul in death has been often tried; and did we believe dying men to be inspired, or that peace and hope in the last hours were God's seal to the truth of doctrines, we should be able to settle at once the controversy about Unitarianism. A striking example of the power of this system in disarming death, was lately given by a young minister in a neighbouring town,* known to many of our readers, and singularly endeared to his friends by eminent christian virtue. He was smitten by sickness in the midst of a useful and happy life, and sunk slowly to the grave. His religion, and it was that which has now been defended, gave habitual peace to his mind, and spread a sweet smile over his pale countenance. He retained his faculties to his last hour; and when death came, having left pious counsel to the younger members of his family, and expressions of gratitude to his parents, he breathed out life in the language of Jesus—'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' Such was the end of one who held, with an unwavering faith, the great principles which we have here advanced; and yet our doctrine has no consolation, we are told, for sickness and death!

We have thus endeavoured to meet objections commonly urged against our views of religion; and we have done this, not to build up a party, but to promote views of Christianity, which seem to us particularly suited to strengthen men's faith in it, and to make it fruitful of good works and holy lives. Christian virtue, christian holiness, love to God and man, these are all which we think worth contending for; and these we believe to be intimately connected with the system now maintained. If in this we err, may God discover our error and disappoint our efforts. We ask no success, but what He may approve—no proselytes but such as will be made better, purer, happier by the adoption of our views...

* Rev. John E. Abbot of Salem. This tract was first published in 1819, in the Christian Disciple.

**EXTRACTS FROM SERMONS PREACHED ON DAYS OF HUMILIATION AND PRAYER
APPOINTED IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST
GREAT BRITAIN, A. D. 1812.**

In all circumstances, at all times, war is to be deprecated. The evil passions which it excites; its ravages; its bloody conflicts, the distress and terror which it carries into domestic life, the tears which it draws from the widow and the fatherless, all render war a tremendous scourge.

There are indeed conditions, in which war is justifiable, is necessary. It may be the last and only method of repelling lawless ambition, of defending invaded liberty and essential rights. It may be the method which God's providence points out by furnishing the means of success. In these cases we must not shrink from war; though even in these we should deeply lament the necessity of shedding human blood. In such wars our country claims and deserves our prayers, our cheerful services, the sacrifice of wealth and even of life. In such wars we have one consolation, when our friends fall on the field of battle; we know that they have fallen in a just cause. Such conflicts, which our hearts and consciences approve, are suited to call forth generous sentiments, to breathe patriotism and fortitude through a community. Could I view the war in which we are engaged in this light, with what different feelings, my friends, should I address you ! We might then look up to God and commit to him our country with a holy confidence. But, in our present state, what can I say to you ? I would, but I cannot address you in the language of encouragement. We are precipitated into a war, which, I think, cannot be justified, and a war, which promises not a benefit, that I can discover, to this country or to the world.

A solemn question now offers itself. What conduct belongs to a good citizen in our present trying condition? To this subject I call your serious attention.

Our condition induces me to begin with urging on you the important duty of cherishing respect for civil government, and a spirit of obedience to the laws. I am sensible, that many whom I address, consider themselves as called to oppose the measures of our present rulers. Let this opposition breathe nothing of insubordination, impatience of authority, or love of change. It becomes you to remember, that government is a divine institution, essential to

the improvement of our nature, the spring of industry and enterprise, the shield of property and life, the refuge of the weak and oppressed. It is to the security which laws afford, that we owe the successful application of human powers. Government, though often perverted by ambition and other selfish passions, still holds a distinguished rank among those influences, by which man has been rescued from barbarism, and conducted through the ruder stages of society, to the habits of order, the diversified employments and dependences, the refined and softened manners, the intellectual, moral and religious improvements of the age in which we live. We are bound to respect government, as the great security for social happiness; and we should carefully cherish that habit of obedience to the laws, without which the ends of government cannot be accomplished. All wanton opposition to the constituted authorities; all censures of rulers, originating in a factious, aspiring, or envious spirit; all unwillingness to submit to laws, which are directed to the welfare of the community, should be rebuked and repressed by the frown of public indignation.

It is impossible, that all the regulations of the wisest government should equally benefit every individual; and sometimes the general good will demand arrangements, which will interfere with the interests of particular members, or classes of the nation. In such circumstances, the individual is bound to regard the inconveniences under which he suffers, as inseparable from a social, connected state, as the result of the condition which God has appointed, and not as the fault of his rulers; and he should cheerfully submit, recollecting how much more he receives from the community, than he is called to resign to it. Disaffection towards a government, which is administered with a view to the general welfare, is a great crime; and such opposition, even to a bad government, as springs from and spreads a restless temper, an unwillingness to yield to wholesome and necessary restraint, deserves no better name. In proportion as a people want a conscientious regard to the laws, and are prepared to evade them by fraud, or to arrest their operation by violence—in that proportion they need and deserve an arbitrary government, strong enough to crush at a blow every symptom of opposition.

These general remarks on the duty of submission, are by no means designed to teach that rulers are never to be opposed. Because I wish to guard you against that turbulent and discontented spirit, which precipitates free communities into anarchy, and thus prepares them for chains, you will not consider me as asserting, that all opposi-

tion to government, whatever be the occasion, or whatever the form, is to be branded as a crime. The citizen has rights as well as duties. Government is instituted for one and a single end,—the benefit of the governed, the protection, peace, and welfare of society; and when it is perverted to other objects, to purposes of avarice, ambition, or party spirit, we are authorised and even bound to make such opposition, as is suited to restore it to its proper end, to render it as pure as the imperfection of our nature and state will admit.

The scriptures have sometimes been thought to enjoin an unqualified, unlimited subjection to the ‘higher powers;’ but in the passages, which seem so to teach, it is supposed, that these powers are ‘ministers of God for good,’ are a terror to evil doers, and an encouragement to those that do well. When a government wants this character, when it becomes an engine of oppression, the scriptures enjoin subjection no longer. Expediency may make it our duty to obey, but the government has lost its rights; it can no longer urge its claims as an ordinance of God.

There have, indeed, been times, when sovereigns have demanded subjection as an unalienable right, and when the superstition of subjects has surrounded them with a mysterious sanctity, with a majesty approaching the divine. But these days have past. Under the robe of office, we, my hearers, have learned to see a man like ourselves. There is no such sacredness in rulers, as forbids scrutiny into their motives, or condemnation of their measures. In leaving the common walks of life, they leave none of their imperfections behind them. Power has even a tendency to corrupt, to feed an irregular ambition, to harden the heart against the claims and sufferings of mankind. Rulers are not to be viewed with a malignant jealousy; but they ought to be inspected with a watchful, undazzled eye. Their virtues and services are to be rewarded with generous praise; and their crimes, and arts, and usurpations should be exposed, with a fearless sincerity, to the indignation of an injured people. We are not to be factious, and neither are we to be servile. With a sincere disposition to obey, should be united a firm purpose not to be oppressed.

So far is an existing government from being clothed with an inviolable sanctity, that the citizen, in particular circumstances, acquires the right, not only of remonstrating, but of employing force for its destruction. This right accrues to him, when a government wantonly disregards the ends of social union; when it threatens the subversion of material liberty and happiness; and when no relief but far remains in the suffering community. This, however, is

a right which cannot be exercised with too much deliberation. Subjects should very slowly yield to the conviction, that rulers have that settled hostility to their interests, which authorises violence. They must not indulge a spirit of complaint, and suffer their passions to pronounce on their wrongs. They must remember, that the best government will partake the imperfection of all human institutions, and that if the ends of the social compact are in any tolerable degree accomplished, they will be mad indeed to hazard the blessings they possess, for the possibility of greater good.

Resistance of established power is so great an evil, civil commotion excites such destructive passions, the result is so tremendously uncertain, that every milder method of relief should first be tried, and fairly tried. The last dreadful resort is never justifiable, until the injured members of the community are brought to despair of other relief, and are so far united in views and purposes as to be authorised in the hope of success. Civil commotion should be viewed as the worst of national evils, with the single exception of slavery. I know that this country has passed through one civil war, without experiencing the calamitous consequences of which I have spoken. But let us not forget, that this was a civil war of a very peculiar character. The government which we shook off was not seated in the midst of us. Our struggle was that of nation with nation, rather than of fellow citizens with one another. Our manners and habits tended to give a considerateness and a stability to the public mind, which can hardly be expected in a future struggle. And, in addition to these favorable circumstances, we were favored by Heaven with a leader of incorruptible integrity, of unstained purity; a patriot who asked no glory but that of delivering his country, who desired to reign only in the hearts of a free and happy people, whose disinterestedness awed and repressed the selfish and ambitious, who inspired universal confidence, and thus was a centre and bond of union to the minds of men in the most divided and distracted period of our country. The name of WASHINGTON I may pronounce with reverence even in the temple of the Almighty; and it is a name which revives the sinking spirits in this day of our declining glory. From a revolution, conducted by such a man, under such circumstances, let no conclusions be hastily drawn on the subject of civil commotion.

It becomes us to rejoice, my friends, that we live under a constitution, one great design of which is, to prevent the necessity of appealing to force, to give the people an opportunity of remov-

ing, without violence, those rulers from whom they suffer or apprehend an invasion of rights. This is one of the principal advantages of a republic over an absolute government. In a despotism, there is no remedy for oppression but force. The subject cannot influence public affairs, but by convulsing the state. With us, rulers may be changed, without the horrors of a revolution. A republican government secures to its subjects this immense privilege, by confirming to them two most important rights—the right of suffrage, and the right of discussing with freedom the conduct of rulers. The value of these rights in affording a peaceful method of redressing public grievances, cannot be expressed, and the duty of maintaining them, of never surrendering them, cannot be too strongly urged. Resign either of these, and no way of escape from oppression will be left you, but civil commotion.

From the important place which these rights hold in a republican government, you should consider yourselves bound to support every citizen in the lawful exercise of them, especially when an attempt is made to wrest them from any by violent means. At the present time, it is particularly your duty to guard, with jealousy, the right of expressing with freedom your honest convictions respecting the measures of your rulers. Without this, the right of election is not worth possessing. If public abuses may not be exposed, their authors will never be driven from power. Freedom of opinion, of speech, and of the press, is our most valuable privilege, the very soul of republican institutions, the safeguard of all other rights. We may learn its value if we reflect that there is nothing which tyrants so much dread. They anxiously fetter the press; they scatter spies through society, that the murmurs, anguish, and indignation of their oppressed subjects may be smothered in their own breasts; that no generous sentiment may be nourished by sympathy and mutual confidence. Nothing awakens and improves men so much as free communication of thoughts and feelings. Nothing can give to public sentiment that correctness, which is essential to the prosperity of a commonwealth, but the free circulation of truth, from the lips and pens of the wise and good. If such men abandon the right of free discussion; if, awed by threats, they suppress their convictions; if rulers succeed in silencing every voice, but that which approves them; if nothing reaches the people, but what will lend support to men in power—farewell to liberty. The form of a free government may remain, but the life, the soul, the substance is fled.

If these remarks be just, nothing ought to excite greater indignation and alarm, than the attempts, which have lately been made to destroy the freedom of the press. We have lived to hear the strange doctrine, that to expose the measures of rulers is treason; and we have lived to see this doctrine carried into practice. We have seen a savage populace excited and let loose on men, whose crime consisted in bearing testimony against the present war, and let loose, not merely to waste their property, but to tear them from the refuge which the magistrate had afforded, and to shed their blood. In this and in other events there have been symptoms of a purpose to terrify into silence those who disapprove the calamitous war under which we suffer; to deprive us of the only method, which is left, of obtaining a wiser and better government. The cry has been, that war is declared, and all opposition should therefore be hushed. A sentiment more unworthy of a free country can hardly be propagated. If this doctrine be admitted, rulers have only to declare war, and they are screened at once from scrutiny. At the very time when they have armies at command, when their patronage is most extended, and their power most formidable, not a word of warning, of censure, of alarm must be heard. The press, which is to expose inferior abuses, must not utter one rebuke, one indignant complaint, although our best interests, and most valuable rights are put to hazard, by an unnecessary war. Admit this doctrine, let rulers once know, that, by placing the country in a state of war, they place themselves beyond the only power they dread, the power of free discussion, and we may expect war without end. Our peace and all our interests require, that a different sentiment should prevail. We should teach our present and all future rulers, that there is no measure, for which they must render so solemn an account to their constituents, as for a declaration of war; that no measure will be so freely, so fully discussed; and that no administration can succeed, in persuading this people to exhaust their treasure and blood in supporting war, unless it be palpably necessary and just. "In war then, as in peace, assert the freedom of speech and of the press." Cling to this, as the bulwark of all your rights and privileges.

But, my friends, I should not be faithful, were I only to call you to hold fast this freedom. I should still more earnestly exhort you not to abuse it. Its abuse may be as fatal to our country as its relinquishment. If undirected, unrestrained by principle, the press, instead of enlightening, deserves the public curse and, by

its licentiousness, forges chains for itself and for the community. The right of free discussion is not the right of uttering what we please. Let nothing be spoken or written but truth. The influence of the press is exceedingly diminished by its gross and frequent misrepresentations. Each party listens with distrust to the statements of the other, and the consequence is that the progress of truth is slow, and sometimes wholly obstructed. Whilst we encourage the free expression of opinion, let us unite in fixing the brand of infamy on falsehood and slander, wherever they originate, whatever be the cause they are designed to maintain.

But it is not enough that truth be told. It should be told for a good end; not to irritate, but to convince; not to inflame the bad passions, but to sway the judgment and to awaken sentiments of patriotism. Unhappily the press seems now to be chiefly prized as an instrument of exasperation. Those who have embraced error are hardened in their principles, by the reproachful epithets heaped on them by their adversaries. I do not mean by this, that political discussion is to be conducted tamely, that no sensibility is to be expressed, no indignation to be poured forth on wicked men and wicked deeds. But this I mean,—that we should deliberately inquire, whether indignation be deserved, before we express it; and the object of expressing it should ever be, not to infuse ill will, rancor, and fury into the minds of men, but to excite an enlightened and conscientious opposition to injurious measures.

Every good man must mourn, that so much is continually published among us, for no other apparent end, than to gratify the malevolence of one party, by wounding the feelings of the opposite. The consequence is, that an alarming degree of irritation exists in our country. Fellow citizens burn with mutual hatred, and some are evidently ripe for outrage and violence. In this feverish state of the public mind we are not to relinquish free discussion, but every man should feel the duty of speaking and writing with deliberation. It is the time to be firm without passion. No menace should be employed to provoke opponents, no defiance hurled, no language used which will, in any measure, justify the ferocious in appealing to force.

The sum of my remarks is this. It is your duty to hold fast and to assert with firmness those truths and principles on which the welfare of your country seems to depend; but do this with calmness, with a love of peace, without ill will and revenge. Use every opportunity of allaying animosities. Discourage, in decided and open language, that rancor, malignity, and unfeeling abuse, which

so often find their way into our public prints. Remember, that in proportion as a people become enslaved to their passions, they fall into the hands of the aspiring and unprincipled; and that a corrupt government, which has an interest in deceiving the people, can desire nothing more favorable to their purposes, than a frenzied state of the public mind.

My friends, in this day of discord, let us cherish and breathe around us the benevolent spirit of Christianity. Let us reserve to ourselves this consolation, that we have added no fuel to the flames, no violence to the storms, which threaten to desolate our country. Though dishonored, though endangered, it is still our country. Let us not forsake it in this evil day. Let us hold fast the inheritance of our civil and religious liberties, which we have received from our fathers, sealed and hallowed by their blood. That these blessings may not be lost, let us labor to improve public sentiment, and to exalt men of wisdom and virtue to power. Let it be our labor to establish in ourselves and in our fellow citizens the empire of true religion. Let us remember that there is no foundation of public liberty but public virtue, that there is no method of obtaining God's protection but adherence to his laws.

Let us not despair of our country. If all that we wish cannot be done, for the state, still something may be done. In the good principles, in the love of order and liberty, by which so many of our citizens are distinguished; in the tried virtue, deliberate prudence, and unshaken firmness of the chief magistrate, whom God in his great goodness has given to this Commonwealth; in the value of the blessings which are at stake; in the peculiar kindness which God has manifested towards our fathers and ourselves; we have motives, encouragements, and solemn obligations to resolute, persevering exertion in our different spheres, and according to our different capacities, for the public good. Thus faithful to ourselves and our country, and using vigorously every righteous means for restoring peace and confirming freedom, we may confidently leave the issue to the wise and holy providence of Him who cannot err, and who, we are assured, will accept and reward every conscientious effort for his own glory and the good of mankind.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON DELIVERED SEPT. 18, 1814, WHEN AN INVASION BY THE BRITISH FORCES WAS APPREHENDED AT BOSTON.

At such a moment as the present, when every mind is fixing a fearful attention on the state of the country, it is impossible that a religious instructor should escape participation in the common feeling. His sacred calling does not require him to separate himself from the community, to forget that he is a citizen, to put off the feelings of a man. The religion which he teaches inculcates public spirit, and a strong and tender concern for all by whom he is surrounded. He would be unworthy his sacred function, were he not to love his country, and to sympathise with its prosperous and adverse fortunes. The religion, which it is his duty to dispense, regards men in all their relations, and affords instructions suited to every condition whether of individuals or communities. You will not then consider me as leaving the province of a religious teacher, if I speak to you of the dangers, and claims of our country, if I address you as citizens, and attempt to point out your duties at the present solemn period:

The present is indeed a solemn period. The sad reverse which this country exhibits astonishes as well as depresses us. But a few years ago, we stood on the height of prosperity. Amidst the storms which desolated nations, we were at peace, and the very storms seemed freighted with blessings for our tranquil shores.—And is it true, that from this height we have sunk so low, that our commerce is swept from the ocean, that industry has forsaken our cities, that the husbandman has resigned the ploughshare for the sword, that our confidence is changed into fear, that the tumult of business has given place to the din of arms, that some of our citizens are perishing in foreign prisons, and others shedding their blood on a foreign soil, that hostile fleets scatter terror through our coasts, and flames through our cities, that no man feels secure, that the thought of invasion and slaughter mingles with the labors of the day, and disturbs the slumbers of the night, and that our national government, impoverished, and inefficient, can afford us no protection from such imminent danger? Yes—this is true; we need no reasoning to convince us of its truth. We see it in the anxious countenance, in the departing family, in the care which removes our possessions, in the obstructions and perplexities of business, and in the events which every day brings to our ears. At such a mo-

ment, it becomes each man to ask himself what are his duties, what the times demand from him, in what manner he may contribute to the public safety. It is a time for seriousness, for consideration. With prosperity, we should dismiss our levity. The period of duty may to many of us be short. Whilst it continues, let it be improved.

1. The first remark I shall make is, that it becomes every man at this solemn moment, to reflect on his own character and life, to inquire what he has done to bring down judgments on his country, to confess and renounce his sins, and to resolve on a sincere obedience of God's commands. We ought to remember that we live under a moral government, which regards the character of communities as truly as of individuals. A nation has reason for fear, in proportion to its guilt; and a virtuous nation, sensible of dependence on God, and disposed to respect his laws, is assured of his protection. Every people must indeed be influenced in a measure by the general state of the world, by the changes and conflicts of other communities. When the ocean is in tumult, every shore will feel the agitation. But a people faithful to God will never be forsaken. In addition to the direct and obvious tendency of national piety and virtue to national safety and exaltation, a virtuous community may expect peculiar interpositions of providence for their defence and prosperity. They are not indeed to anticipate visible miracles. They are not to imagine, that invading hosts will be annihilated like Sennacherib's by the arm of an angel. But God, we must remember, can effect his purposes, and preserve the just, without such stupendous interpositions. The hearts of men are in his hand. The elements of nature obey his word. He has winds to scatter the proudest fleet, diseases to prostrate the strongest army. Consider how many events must conspire, how many secret springs must act in concert, to accomplish the purposes of the statesman, or the plans of the warrior. How often have the best concerted schemes been thwarted, the most menacing preparations been defeated, the proud boast of anticipated victory been put to shame, by what we call casualty, by a slight and accidental want of concert, by the error of a chief, or by neglect in subordinate agents. Let God determine the defeat of an enemy and we need not fear that means will be wanting. He sends terror, or blindness, or mad presumption into the minds of leaders. Heaven, earth, and sea are arrayed to oppose their progress. An unconquerable spirit is breathed into the invaded; and the dreaded foe seeks his safety in dishonorable flight.

My friends, if God be for us, no matter who is against us. Mere power ought not to intimidate us; He can crush it in a moment. We live in a period when God's supremacy has been remarkably evinced, when he has signally confounded the powerful, and delivered the oppressed and endangered. At his word, the forged chain has been broken; mighty armies have been dispersed as chaff before the whirlwind; colossal thrones have been shivered like the brittle clay. God is still 'wonderful in counsel and excellent in working,' and if he wills to deliver us, we cannot be subdued. It is then most important that we seek God's favor. And how is his favor to be obtained? I repeat it—He is a moral governor, the friend of the righteous, the punisher of the wicked; and in proportion as piety, uprightness, temperance, and christian virtue prevail among us, in that proportion we are assured of his favor and protection. A virtuous people, fighting in defence of their altars and firesides, may look to God with confidence. An invisible, but almighty arm surrounds them, an impenetrable shield is their shadow and defence.

It becomes us then to inquire, how far have we sustained the character of a pious and virtuous people? And whose heart does not accuse him of many sins? Who can look round on his country, and not see many proofs of ingratitude to God, and of contempt of his laws? Do I speak to any, who, having received success and innumerable blessings from God, have yet forgotten the giver? to any who have converted abundance into the instrument of excess? to any, who, having been instructed by the gospel, have yet refused to employ in well doing the bounty of Heaven? to any, who are living in habits of intemperance, impurity, impiety, fraud, or any known sin? To such I would say, You are among the enemies of your country, and, should she fall, among the authors of her ruin. Let then this season be something more than an occasion of formal confession. We owe to ourselves and our country deep sorrow for our sins, and those sincere purposes of reformation, which more than all things, bring down blessings from Heaven.

2. Having recommended penitence in general as suited to the present moment, let me particularly recommend one branch of piety which the times demand of us. Let us each be instant and fervent in prayer. Let us pray to God, that he will not forsake us in this dark and menacing day; that he will remember the mercy shown to our fathers; that he will crown with success our efforts in defence of our possessions, our dwellings, and our temples; that he will breathe an invincible courage into our soldiers; that he

will guard and guide our rulers; that he will turn the invader from our shores; or, if he shall otherwise appoint, that he will be our shield in battle, and will send us deliverance. For these blessings let us daily besiege the mercy-seat of God, deeply convinced that he controls the destinies of armies and nations, that he gives or withholds success, and that without him all exertion is unavailing. By this it is not intended that we are to do nothing but pray; that we are to leave our shores without defence, or neglect any means of security. God gives us powers that we should exert, weapons that we should wield them. We are to employ every resource which he grants us; but, having done this, we must remember that on God, not on ourselves, depends the result of our exertions. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. God gives victory, and to him let every eye and heart be directed. You who have no other weapons, contend with your prayers for your country.—It will not be imagined from these remarks, that by importunity of prayer God can be bent to favor an unjust cause. But when our cause is just; when, instead of waging offensive war, we gather round our city and shores for defence, we may be assured that sincere prayer, united with sincere purposes of obedience, will not be lost. Prayer is a proper and appointed acknowledgement of our dependence, an essential means and branch of piety; and they who neglect it have no reason to hope the protection, which they will not implore. Let us then take heed, lest the tumult of military preparation make us forgetful of the Author of all good, lest in collecting armies and raising walls of defence we forsake the footstool of the Almighty, the only giver of victory.

3. This is a time when we should all bring clearly, and strongly to our minds our duties to our country, and should cherish a strong and ardent attachment to the public good. The claims of country have been felt and obeyed even in the rudest ages of society. The community to which we belong is commended by our very nature to our affection and service. Christianity, in enjoining a disinterested and benevolent spirit, admits and sanctions this sentiment of nature, this attachment to the land of our fathers, the land of our nativity. It only demands, that our patriotism be purified from every mixture of injustice towards foreign nations. Within this limit we cannot too ardently attach ourselves to the welfare of our country. Especially in its perils, we should fly to its rescue with filial zeal and affection, resolved to partake its sufferings, and prepared to die in its defence. The present moment, my friends, calls on us for this fervent patriotism. The question now is, not whether we

will carry invasion, slaughter, and desolation into an unoffending province, not whether we will give our strength and wealth to the prosecution of unprincipled plans of conquest, but whether we will defend our firesides and altars, whether we will repel from our shores an hostile army. On this question our duty is clear. However unjustifiable may have been the measures by which we have been reduced to this mournful extremity, our right to our soil and our possessions remains unimpaired; the right of defence can never be wrested from us; and never, whilst God gives means of resistance, ought we to resign our country to the clemency of a foe. Our duties as patriots and Christians are plain. Whilst we disclaim all share in the guilt of that war which is bursting on our shores, we should resolve, that we will be true to ourselves, to our fathers, and to posterity, that we will maintain the inheritance which we have received, that whilst God gives us power we will not receive law as a conquered people.

We should animate our patriotism at this moment of danger, by reflecting that we have a country to contend for which deserves every effort and sacrifice. As members of this Commonwealth, in particular, we have every motive to invigorate our hearts and hands. We have the deeds of our fathers, their piety and virtues, and their solicitude for the rights and happiness of their posterity, to awaken our emulation. How invaluable the inheritance they have left us, earned by their toils and defended by their blood! Our populous cities and cultivated fields, our schools, colleges, and churches, our equal laws, our uncorrupted tribunals of justice, our spirit of enterprise, and our habits of order and peace, all combine to form a commonwealth as rich in blessings and privileges as the history of the world records. We possess, too, the chief glory of a state, many virtuous and disinterested citizens, a chief magistrate who would adorn any country and any age, enlightened statesmen, and, I trust, a fearless soldiery. Such a community deserves our affection, our honor, our zeal, the vigor of our arms, and the devotion of our lives. If we look back to Sparta, Athens, and Rome, we shall find, that in the institutions of this Commonwealth, we have sources of incomparably richer blessings, than those republics conferred on their citizens in their proudest days; and yet Sparta, and Rome, and Athens inspired a love stronger than death. In the day of their danger, every citizen offered his breast as a bulwark, every citizen felt himself the property of his country. It is true, a base alloy mingled with the patriotism of ancient times, and God forbid

that a sentiment so impure should burn in our breasts. God forbid, that like the Greek and the Roman, we should carry fire and slaughter into other countries, to build up a false fleeting glory at home. But whilst we take warning by their excesses, let us catch a portion of their fervor, and learn to live, not for ourselves, but for that country, whose honor and interest God has intrusted to our care.

4. The times especially demand of us that we cherish a spirit of fortitude, courage, and resolution. The period of danger is the time to arm the mind with all the force and energy of which it is susceptible. In communities, as in individuals, there is a proneness to excessive alarm. Especially when untried, unexperienced dangers approach, imagination is prone to enlarge them; a panic spreads like lightning from breast to breast, and before a blow is struck, a people are subdued by their fears. There is a rational fear, which we ought to cherish, a fear which views in all its dimensions approaching peril, and prepares with vigilance every means of defence. At the present moment we ought not to shut our eyes on our danger. Our enemy is formidable. A veteran army, trained to war, accustomed to success, fresh from conquest, and led by experienced commanders, is not to be despised, even if inferior in numbers, and even if it have received a temporary check. But such an army owes much of its formidableness to the fearless spirit which habit has fostered; and the best weapon, under Providence, which we can oppose to it, is the same courage, nurtured by reflection, by sentiments of honor, and by the principles of religion. Courage indeed is not always invincible, and when God destines a nation to bondage the valor of the hero is unavailing. But it is generally true, that a brave people, contending in a just cause, possess in their courage the pledge of success. The instrument by which God rescues nations is their own undaunted resolution. Let us then cherish in ourselves and others, a firm and heroic spirit. Let us fortify our minds, by reflecting on the justice of our cause, that we are standing on our own shores, and defending invaded rights. Let us show that our love of peace has not originated in timidity, and that the spirit of our fathers still lives in their sons. Let us call to the support of our resolution the principles of religion. Devoting ourselves to God, and engaging in this warfare from a sense of duty, let us feel that we are under His protection, that in the heat of battle he is near us, that life and death await his word, and that death, in a service which he approves, is never untimely and is never to be

shunned. Let us consider that life at best is short, and its blessings transitory; that its great end is to train us to virtue and to prepare us for heaven; and that we had far better resign it at once than protract it by baseness or unmanly fear. Death awaits us all, and happy he who meets it in the discharge of duty. Most happy and most honored of men is the martyr to religion, who seals with his blood those truths, on which human virtue, consolation and hope, depend; and next to him, happy is the martyr to the cause of his country, who, in obedience to God, opposes his breast to the sword of her invaders, and repays with life the protection she has afforded.

5. I have thus, my friends, set before you your duties to God and your country in this period of danger. Let me close with offering a few remarks on your duties to your enemies. You will remember that we profess a religion, which enjoins benevolence towards all mankind, even towards our personal and national foes. Let not our patriotism be sullied with malignant passions. Whilst we defend our shores with courage, let us not cherish hatred towards our invaders. We should not open our ear to every idle tale of their outrages, nor heap calumnies on their heads because they are enemies. The brave are generous. True courage needs not malignity to feed and inflame it. Especially when our foe is an illustrious nation, which for ages has defended and nurtured the interests of religion, science, and humanity; a nation to which grateful Europe is now offering acknowledgements for the protection which she has extended over the oppressed, and for the vigor with which she has cooperated in prostrating the bloody and appalling power of the usurper;—when such a nation is our foe, we should feel it unworthy and debasing to encourage a rancorous and vindictive spirit. True, she is sending her armies to our shores; but let us not forget, that our own government first sent slaughter and conflagration into her unoffending provinces. Let not approaching danger disturb our recollections, or unsettle our principles. If we are to meet her armies in battle, which God in his mercy forbid, let us meet them with that magnanimity, which is candid and just even to its foes. Let us fight, not, like beasts of prey, to glut revenge, but to maintain our rights, to obtain an honorable peace, and to obtain a victory which shall be signalized by clemency as well as by valor. God forbid, that our conflicts should add fury to those bad passions and national antipathies, which have helped to bring this country to its present degraded and endangered condition.

I have placed before you your duties. God give you grace to perform them. In this day of danger we know not what is before us; but this we know, that the path of piety, of virtue, of patriotism, and manly courage, leads to glory and to immortality. No enemy can finally injure us, if we are true to God, to our country, to mankind. In such a cause as ours, I trust, prosperity and victory will be granted us by the almighty Disposer. But whether success or disaster await us, we know that the world is passing away, and that all of us will soon be placed beyond the reach of its changes. Let us not then be elated or depressed; but, with a firm and equal mind, let us acquit ourselves as men and Christians in our several spheres, looking upward to heaven as our rest and reward.

NOTICE OF THE REV. S. C. THACHER..

[The Rev. S. C. THACHER, late Minister of the New South Church in Boston, died at Moulins, in France, Jan. 2, 1818, AEtat. 32. He had long been absent from this country, and had visited the Cape of Good Hope, for the recovery of his health. The following sketch of his character is taken from a discourse delivered in the church, where he had been accustomed to officiate, the Sunday after the accounts of his death were received.]

THE news of Mr. Thacher's death, although not unexpected, spread an unusual gloom through the large circle in which he moved and was known. When we thought of his youth and virtues, of the place which he had filled and of the confidence he had inspired, of his sickness and sufferings, of his death in a distant land, and of the hopes which died with him, we could not but speak of his removal as mysterious, dark, untimely. My own mind participated at first in the general depression; but in proportion as I have reflected on the circumstances of this event, I have seen in them a kindness, which I overlooked in the first moments of sorrow; and though in many respects inscrutable, this dispensation now wears a more consoling aspect.

I now see in our friend a young man, uncommonly ripe in understanding and virtue, for whom God appointed an early immortality. His lot on earth was singularly happy; for I have never known a minister more deeply fixed in the hearts of his people. But this condition had its perils. With a paternal concern for his character God sent adversity, and conducted him to the end of his

being by a rougher but surer way, a way trodden and consecrated by the steps of the best men before him. He was smitten by sudden sickness; but everywhere the hand of God was gentle upon him. His sickness, whilst it wasted the body, had no power over the spirit. His understanding retained its vigor; and his heart, as I often observed, gained new sensibility. His sufferings, by calling forth an almost unprecedented kindness in his parishioners, furnished him with new and constant occasions of pious gratitude, and perhaps he was never so thankful to the Author of his being, as during his sickness.

He was indeed removed at length from the kind offices of his friends. But this event was fitted, and, may I not say, designed, to strengthen his connexion with God, and to prepare him for the approaching dissolution of all earthly ties. I now see him tossed on the ocean; but his heart is fixed on the rock of ages. He is borne to another hemisphere, but everywhere he sees the footsteps and feels the presence of God. New constellations roll over his head, but they guide his mind to the same Heaven, which was his hope at home. I see him at the extremity of Africa, adoring God in the new creation which spreads around him, and thanking him with emotion for the new strength, which that mild atmosphere communicated. I see him too in the trying scene which followed, when he withered and shrunk like a frail plant under the equinoctial sun, still building piety on suffering, and growing in submission, as hope declined. He does not indeed look without an occasional sinking of the heart, without some shudderings of nature, to a foreign soil as his appointed grave. But he remembers, that from every region there is a path to immortality, and that the spirit, which religion has refined, wherever freed from the body, will find its native country. He does not indeed think without emotion of home,—a thought, how trying to a sick and dying man, in a land of strangers! But God, whom he adores as everywhere present, seems to him a bond of union to distant friends, and he finds relief in committing them to his care and mercy.—At length I see him expire; but not until suffering has done its work of discipline and purification. His end is tranquil, like his own mild spirit; and I follow him—not to the tomb, for that lifeless body is not he—but to the society of the just made perfect. His pains are now past. He has found a better home, than this place of his nativity and earthly residence. Without the tossings of another voyage, he has entered a secure haven. The fever no longer burns in his veins; the hollow and deep voice no longer sends forth ominous sounds.

Disease and death, having accomplished their purpose, have lost their power, and he remembers, with gratitude, the kind severity with which they conducted him to a nobler life, than that which they took away. Such is the aspect which his dispensation now wears; how different from that which it first presented to sense and imagination!

Let me pay a short tribute to his memory. It is a duty, which I perform with a melancholy pleasure. His character was one, which it is soothing to remember. It comes over the mind, like the tranquillizing breath of spring. It asks no embellishment. It would be injured by a strained and labored eulogy.

The character of our friend was distinguished by blandness, mildness, equableness and harmony. All the elements were tempered in him kindly and happily. He passed through the storms, tumults and collisions of human life, with a benignity akin to that which marked our perfect guide and example. This mild and bland temper spread itself over the whole man. His manners, his understanding, his piety, all received a hue from it, just as a soft atmosphere communicates its own tender and tranquil character to every object and scene viewed through it.

With this peculiar mildness he united firmness. His purposes, whilst maintained without violence, were never surrendered but to conviction. His opinions, though defended with singular candor, he would have sealed with his blood. He possessed the only true dignity, that which results from proposing habitually a lofty standard of feeling and action; and accordingly the love, which he called forth, was always tempered with respect. He was one of the last men to be approached with a rude familiarity.

His piety was a deep sentiment. It had struck through and entwined itself with his whole soul. In the freedom of conversation I have seen how intimately God was present to him. But his piety partook of the general temperament of his mind. It was warm, but not heated; earnest, but tranquil; a habit, not an impulse; the air which he breathed, not a tempestuous wind, giving occasional violence to his emotions. A constant dew seemed to distil on him from heaven, giving freshness to his devout sensibilities; but it was a gentle influence, seen not in its falling, but in its fruits. His piety appeared chiefly in gratitude and submission, sentiments peculiarly suited to such a mind as his. He felt strongly, that God had crowned his life with peculiar goodness, and yet, when his blessings were withdrawn, his acquiescence was as deep and sincere as his thankfulness. His devotional exercises in public were

itations and encouragements, I might have wanted confidence, under the lassitude of feeble health, to attempt the little which I have done for the cause of religion and freedom.

I will only add, that whilst I attach no great value to these articles, I still should not have submitted to the labor of partially revising them, did I not believe, that they set forth some great truths, which, if carried out and enforced by more gifted minds, may do much for human improvement. If, by anything which I have written, I may be an instrument of directing such minds more seriously to the claims and true greatness of our nature, I shall be most grateful to God. This subject deserves and will sooner or later engage the profoundest meditations of wise and good men. I have done for it what I could; but when I think of its grandeur and importance, I earnestly desire and anticipate for it more worthy advocates. In truth, I shall see with no emotion but joy these fugitive productions forgotten and lost in the superior brightness of writings consecrated to the work of awakening in the human soul a consciousness of its divine and immortal powers.

W. E. C.

Boston, April, 1830.

